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In this pdf (index in the first page) the reader will find the compilation of the articles written within EOALab project. During this project, all partners of workgroup 2, on innovation in the opera practice, have written short publications expressing their views on the subject. Each starting from their experience and expertise provides a rich variety of approaches and insights on the matter.

Participants to this workgroup on

Innovative approaches to opera making: policy recommendations for opera training are:

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A new singer's profile (?)

Vocal approaches for new opera making within the HEIs. How do we see it?

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Opera has been facing, since the baroque period and until the 20th century, challenges and transformations that are consequence of the positive or negative interaction with the socio-cultural and artistic context of each moment in history. Surprisingly, in the last decades, there is a feeling that opera is losing the ability to rethink itself in line with the referred artistic and socio-cultural context of our contemporaneity. In the midst of the major opera houses in Europe we read statistics that point to the continuation of the demand for the *Grand Opéra*, with monumental interpretations that tend to be conservative. However, the proliferation of an alternative circuit around the opera is evident, with new repertoire being created or with bold approaches to an existing repertoire. Once again, the socio-cultural, artistic and also economic context has played an important role in this gradual transformation.

The transformation of the professional opera world is underway. Our question is: *how are higher education music institutions (HEIs) answering these changes within their vocal departments? Are we ready to face this change or do we assume there is none? Are we providing the most suitable path for our students in preparation to the labor market? Are we reflecting on the need of a new approach to a professional opera singer vocality or we consider we are covering all the skills required in this growing stream of challenging tradition?*

This reflection does not aim to undermine or devalue the importance of tradition, but rather to call attention to the construction of a profile of singers increasingly adjusted to contemporary demands.

The construction of a more available profile to accept and dominate new vocalities, new ways of relating to the body, new ways of relating to the text and its semantics and new ways of relating to the practice of collaborative and co-creative work.

A profile that creates proactive and attentive professionals to the reality that surrounds them.

For obvious reasons in this reflection, we will have to focus on a more specific scope related to the voice and, inherently, also on the body. We have inquired the vocal departments of the member institutions of the European Opera Academy (EOA) to find out how HEIs are responding to the gradual but clear change in the requirements of the professional environment. From this sample, we will draw a sort of reflexive summary on this topic.

"We frequently hear the question, what is opera? followed by an answer conceding defeat." (Martín, 2002, p. 116)

"Is opera dying? [...] One is tempted to declare <<Opera is dead>> but [...] could one make such a declaration without immediately having to follow it with <<Long live opera>>?" (Cermatori, 2013, p. 4)

Opera isn't dying but it's changing. The world is changing, isn't it? Is Europe dying in 2021 or it's just undergoing in an inevitable transformation (as anything in life)? "Opera reflects every historical era's particular aesthetics needs and concerns" (Martín, 2002, p. 116) so why don't we accept that?

Eventually we should stop posing these same questions "What is opera?" or "Is opera dying?" over and over (these questions are also exhausted as arguably opera is), stop worrying about the survival of the genre and focus in reflecting upon what we want opera to be in the 21st century, within our era's needs and concerns. Does it make sense - excluding the relevant issue of museum preservation of the event as an object of value - to keep thinking opera as it was thought in the 18th and 19th centuries, for example?

As, an elucidative reminder of what could be the opera's contemporary thinking essence, we should understand that opera not only consists of arias and scenes, but rather reflects on the human existence.

Peter Konwitschny goes a bit further saying that:

"The theatre is not a museum. (...) The purpose of a theatrical performance primarily consists in having a dialogue with the audience about essential themes in society as well as in the lives of the individual". (Konwitschny, 2021).

Any worthy work of opera should provide in itself enough material to start this dialogue, whether through new repertoire or through contemporary approaches to an existing repertoire.

These reflections about opera relation with this society and its context have been slowly changing the opera labor market and presenting new challenges for all the players involved in the genre. Singers, composers, directors, librettists, musicians, opera houses, cultural entities, audiences, stage designers, promoters, music academies, higher music education institutions (HMEI) [...], all of them face these challenges and they all have their share of responsibility in shaping the future of opera.

It's probably fair to state that the HMEIs are aware of a change of the opera labor market of our days. This was unanimously stated in the answer to our query which somehow confirmed our own perspective about these changes. The "demand and proliferation of an alternative circuit is evident" in two different identified strands: 1) the new repertoire and 2) contemporary approaches to an existing repertoire.

If this change is clear for the institutions, apparently the reaction to this fact hasn't been sufficiently able to address those changes from the curricula, inside the academy. We all know the burden of academic validation that those institutions carry and that makes adaptation movements become slow and painful. We are able to collect a sense that the resistance to the needed adjust of the school to the labor market is often created internally, i.e., teaching staff but also students themselves which sometimes resist to new repertoire mainly by the challenges the repertoire implies, musically and vocally. The strong tradition where opera has lived in the last centuries is an additional issue that hold back the possibility of incorporating changes. One should not neglect that some of these key players (singing teachers for instance) keep this strong position because it's comfortable to maintain the status quo, because that's their comfort zone (musical and vocally) but also because some of the contemporary proposals have been poorly sustained. It would be interesting, in future studies, to develop this questioning about the reasons why this happens. Does it have to do with pre-university education or a cultural conception of

opera? Why is it that the opera wants to remain unchanged from within itself? Will it be a perspective of survival via the validated and known? Is it fear of jeopardizing the genre?

“There is no standard solution” as the national contexts in Europe are quite diverse, in terms of opera labor market but also in terms of Higher Education regulations, expectations and/or tradition.

Some of the answers to this questionnaire show that some HEIs are trying to adapt their curricula to the identified changes but it's assumed that it's a slow and long process also due to the overload of the actual curricula.

But what are the skills needed for a singer in this changing context?

As said before there isn't a universal solution or answer to this question specially because it should relate to the specific context where this question is made. What is clear is that an opera singer is not just someone who sings. Some believe this was always the case, but we have also those who argue that, historically, the voice was almost all that mattered neglecting the body within space and time and even the language (leave alone the issue of co-creation of the singer's role or interpretation freedom). Following this last perspective, the singer was considered a figure excluded from the creative process and mostly answering to the requests of the *mise-en-scène* and of the musical director.

What surpasses from the vocal departments of EOA's institutions is mostly the need of some skills to be added to the ones already in place for many decades so the alumni, when entering the labor market, would be able to tackle both traditional approaches (still considered the biggest slice of opera market) and show more flexibility to properly address contemporary repertoire and/or contemporary staging. These new skills identified in this poll are body work, text/language work, improvisation technics and vocal/ear extended technics. Entrepreneurial, social and communication skills were also pointed out as important extra musical features to strengthen the student's profile. It's noted that these *new* skills should be “built on the fundament of core skills” and that the profile of the young singers should grow a wider general artistic drive and an updated insight of the social and political positioning of opera of the 21st century transforming their mindset.

Due to its relevance and persistence in the majority of answers received we need to stress the identified need of developing a new and organic relation between voice and body (we dare to add to this system the thought, building the tryptic *thought-body-voice*).

“There is no voice without body nor body without voice.”
(Pereira, 2016, p. 22)

The body work, together with language work are considered as must have within the curricula. Even if most of institutions claim they tackle these issues it's still not clear how transversal they are, and which weight have inside the curricula. The body work seems to be already in place in several curricula around Europe but the issue of language work, considered of utmost importance and assumed as a skill by default, not always find the right place in the curricula or the right relationship between the study of the languages and its fusion with the singing practice. Sometimes voice students are “just supposed to have the [language] skills”. The institutions with drama departments have an additional plus with the possibility of sharing the actors' training both in terms of body work and speaking voice.

“I am now working in baroque singing department [...]. As funny as it may sound, we are standing with one foot in deep past- ancient Greece - where text meaning, rhetoric and body language is extremely important, and with another leg we are (I dare to say) one step forward that what we call classical opera. Firstly, the text, emotions and rhetoric lead the ornamentation, the character, how will the singer sing it, tempo... Smart singers must be like researchers, with ability to read a lot, to educate themselves, to be ready to experiment a lot. Not to be afraid to search for new sounds, to search for new movements, to be able to talk through body.” (Monta Martinsone, 2021)

As previously implied, we feel there is still a considerable gap between the identified needed skills to the present and future labor market and the curricular answer of the HMEIs while preparing the future professionals. Naturally the size of this gap is different in each institution and respective curricula. It's also noted that even if the curricula don't explicitly convey these new skills, there are regular extracurricular activities that intend to bridge the aforementioned gap. This is probably a first step for future implementation in the curricula.

Some EOA institutions report they have already officially embedded text and body work in their curricula, promoting new opera performances within the study plan while improvisation and vocal extended techniques are mainly approached in a workshop basis. It's also important to mention that some report a scarce investment in the referred areas of improvisation and extended techniques.

The feedback received also touches on an interesting point that we should take into account. The role of the teachers, namely the singing teachers. It is said that this gap widely "depends on your singing teacher". It is added, in other testimony, that some "teachers speak a lot about those questions during classes, however it is not included in our curricula as teaching object". We find this info relevant and, if not at all surprising, should not be dismissed. This fact should make us reflect on the real need for curriculum revision, increasing the possibility that all students have access to training that is more adjusted to the needs widely identified by the contemporary aesthetic and the labor market. Music HEIs surely trust their teaching staff and we are assuming that all teachers do their best in their role. Therefore, this reflection is also addressed to the teachers themselves so that they can carry out a deep and honest self-reflection on the adequacy of their teaching to our *zeitgeist*.

Let's assume, just for the sake of this exercise, that we've reached an agreement on the new skills needed for the singer of the 21st century.

How should we cope with the integration of these new skills? Should we add these to the ones existing in the traditional singer education or should we have a new/modern singer education, a new course?

Overviewing the collected answers, it remains clear that the best methodology considered is to integrate the new skills into the traditional opera singer's education. If the voice is well founded "old and new skills match" and what is needed is a "strong essential skillset as the bottom line for additional artistic tools". The different skills don't "really disturb each other" and as it's clear that we need to include new skills answering the new needs it also becomes clear that the traditional educational model is still relevant. It's noted, once again, that the students are inevitably at the core of the needed change. It was mentioned that a considerable high number of students are not interested in the suggested changes: "very few students are interested in other musical languages or other approaches to opera". Institutions offering optional subject on improvisation and contemporary ensembles claim that those subjects are "not very popular with the students".

EOA's vocal departments were also questioned about **what could change in the curricula and in the teaching methodologies that would benefit the creation of a profile of a singer of 21st century**. From the answers we may identify topics such as the methodological interest in 1) interdisciplinary work, 2) producing contemporary operas and new approaches to early music repertoire within the curricula, 3) working on performances and also on technique at the same time (considering the possibility of multiple teachers work sessions), 4) connecting, as much as possible and in as many different ways, with the "outside world".

"We should let musicians from different fields to search together."

With all the aforementioned in place we could imagine, more and more, **opera singers playing a new interactive role in the socio-cultural and political context of this 21st century world. What about now? Is this already happening?**

Our poll mostly points us to a YES as an answer to this question.

"The socio-cultural, artistic and also economic context have been playing an important role in the gradual transformation of Opera, allowing and obliging many singers to choose an alternative circuit to the field of opera, demanding the choice of new ways of relating to the practice of collaborative and co-creative work around the Opera and the Music Theatre. This need for a more flexible and open profile of a singer may create proactive and attentive professionals to the reality that surrounds them. In this sense, the opera singer may turn opera into this new artistic and cultural performance practice process which allows it to become intrinsically significant in the communities' history and also in the audiences' development."
(António Salgado, 2021)

The student's profile that has been discussed here would grow a critical community of professionals that have the chance of building a possibility of rethink opera as an active and alive genre in the relation with its audience, with its stakeholder, with its professionals and with its time.

Opera, by its textual nature, addresses themes of contemporaneity and as it did in the past (just consider, for instance, Mozart's Don Giovanni, Puccini's La Bohème or Verdi's Otello) and share its critical lens over society. "Culture and society can only benefit from that". This new profile might also provide a higher level of artistic singularity and create a space for the singer/artist bigger than only his/her voice. There were, nevertheless, doubts about the students' awareness of their power and impact as individuals and as professionals.

In this small article we mainly touched the role of the institutions and the teachers as it was the main core of this investigation. Nevertheless, it's perfectly clear for us that the student is the core of this reflection and a key element in this learning process. The student's mindset is essential in building the individual profile of the future professional. The academic context must favor and instigate the student, but he/she is the main responsible of the success of this journey. The students' openness and critical perspective to the contemporary world are also fundamental for their own sake but also as a lever, by their active and responsible action inside the institutions, to the needed transformation.

Disclaimers

We got only 12 answers to our questionnaire. The sample is not big but, somehow, several institutions, from 7 different countries participated which make us consider that the results are interesting. They show clear tendencies and common concerns even if the contextual gap between countries and institutions is quite evident.

These answers were the kickoff point for the authors' critical analysis and this small article should be read as such. Nevertheless, we hope this analysis is relevant for the reader individual positioning about the studied subjects.

The questionnaire was answered from the beginning of January until the end of February 2021.

We will quote from the answers of the questionnaire mostly anonymously in order to preserve the privacy of the respondents.

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Answers to the questionnaire sent to the EOA's vocal departments

In-Between Time and Space:

A Research on the Performative Process of Meaning Production

Landscape as a *potential receptacle – a meeting-place* – for artistic actions and cultural happenings

António Salgado¹

Theme: Exploring and discussing the dramaturgy and the history of the landscape and how from these reflexions a cultural or artistic activity may emerge, and how landscape architects, planners and performing artists can collaborate on this issue, becoming expressively engaged in an act of deliverance and mindfulness, politically interventive and capable to enable radical transformations of the communities' life, of the space/time of their existence and, not less essential, of their development processes.

This paper explores the issue of how the environment is rich in information about its own structure and dynamics, and its main theoretical proposal is that this information is directly available to the perceiver. And, at the same time, it will investigate artistic performance and musical activity in the landscape as a contribution to the awareness and mindfulness of what is specified in the environment as well as in the musical/performance structure without resorting to a series of constructive mind stages.

Gibson (1960, 1979) suggests that in order to perceive a stable environment, one must be able to detect constant, invariant elements in the visual and acoustical array. Performance and musical performance, in this case, may assume and embody the role of a messenger of the landscape history or may use the landscape² and the landscape theory and architecture as part of a new sense of reality created through the musical and dramaturgical process of meaning production and where artistic and cultural performative events may be provided to happen.

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² All the perceptible features of an area of countryside or land often considered in terms of their aesthetic appeal.

In this sense, the intersection of the fields - Landscape Theory/Architecture and Performing/Cultural Arts - will have most profit by using reciprocally their knowledge, especially in the sense of creating new artistic and landscape realities which may politically involve local communities in the discussion of the reality of their own time and space of existence and of their development processes.

Schechner (2002), author of the first "*Introduction of Performance studies*", states that Performance Studies examine performances in two categories:

A. Artistic Performance. "*If we ponder this first category – Artistic Performance – we see that it considers performance as an art form: Solo-performance, performance art, music performance, performance of literature, theatrical storytelling and plays, and performance poetry.*"

B. Cultural Performance. "*The second category – Cultural Performance - includes events that occur in everyday life in which culture values are displayed for their perpetuation: rituals such as parades, religious ceremonies, community festivals, controversial storytelling, and performances of social and professional roles, and individual performances of race, gender, sexuality and class.*"

Schechner (2002) refers to Performance Studies as an "inter-discipline", or a "post-discipline", but in the sense used in the actual context - *Performance Studies* - become a "multi-discipline" in the sense that the multiplicity of its disciplines, methods and fields of study, which are at use within the performance creative research, will purchase and purpose the appearance of new realities and entities which may be the result of the *becoming process of a multi-disciplinary event*.

By drawing from theories of the Performing Arts, Music Performance studies and Landscape Theory/Architecture all together, the theoretical process subjacent to the different involved artistic and scientific fields rose a new bridge between them and disclosed a new exciting and thrilling field of research which has already given birth to some worthy reflections, new important essays, and excellent performance practice results.³

³ See in Research Catalogue the investigation and the discussions resulting from *Meeting(s)-place(s) research project(s): Meeting Places - Music Theatre and Landscape*, an Erasmus+ project with European Funding shared by the SADA (Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts), SLU (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences), the University of Winchester, England, Malmö Academy of Music, and the ESMAE (Superior School of Music, Drama and Performing Arts), in Porto, Portugal.

In fact, one of the great achievements of the *Meeting-place(s) project(s)* was to raise an awareness on how Landscape, as a borderland in-between artistic and scientific research fields, affects and is affected by tradition, customs and daily life; it has also clarified the basis of the multidisciplinary investigation of *Landscape* – a unique and singular *substratual layer*⁴ - where the referred processes of meaning production may happen and emerge.

The way the structure and the dynamics of Landscape has affected (and has been affected by) the production of sound is well documented in the history of mankind,⁵ including in the mythological stories.⁶ Since ancient times Landscape (nature- and urban-) has always been present and affected the production of human myths, arts and music within mythological and religious ceremonies. These myths and stories report the significance that human kind attributes since ancient times to the rapport between sound and space, between music and landscape. Since ancient times myth has flourished in the confusion that reigns between these two elements of composition: the *eye* and the *ear*.⁷ *The eye* holds, separates, confines, delineates, establishes the orthodoxy of Reason; *the ear* flows, brings together, develops continuity, inspires the heterodoxy of Body and Life. These two notions of space and time are diametrically opposed: “*one is centripetal, the other centrifugal*” (Suner, 2014).

Nevertheless, the composition of sound has often brought into its domain the

⁴ Substrate, by definition, is a substance or layer that underlies something, or on which some process emerges, in particular.

⁵ It is well known how Landscape has inspired the manufacturing of musical instruments to overcome the imposed natural obstacles, as it is the case of the alhorn; also, how it has inspired the herders to sing in order to call their stock, or to communicate between distant neighbors, as it is the case of the Alpine Yodel (a vocal technique also used in many cultures worldwide).

⁶ The Mythology is full of such narratives. The walls of Jericho crumbled at the sound of the Seven Trumpets and Joshua's people clamors; Amphion, son of Zeus and Antiope, raised the ramparts of Thebes with the magic musical chords of his lyre.

⁷ For further information see M. Dufrenne. (1987). *L'oeil et L'oreille*, Éditions de l'Hexagone et Mikel Dufrenne. ISBN 2-89006-258-9. See also Bruno Suner. *La ville comme scène*/Bruno Suner, Valeur(s) 2014. Available in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGn7nTFE0j0_5_9_2016_21.12> Retrieved: 1st of April of 2019.

orthodoxy of the *eye*.⁸ Likewise, the composition of space has brought into its domain the heterodoxy of the *ear*.⁹ Thus, the large number of mimetic processes observed between the two realms show enough evidence to suggest the existence of exit-points, land-scape-lines, lines-of-flight¹⁰ promoting singular events in a recurrent way which enable the creative artistic and cultural production of meaning to *flow* freely between these two referred domains.

It is true that *Landscape* has often played, historically, the background role of a staged ‘scenery’; but to consider it just as a ‘scenario’ is to tell very little of about its main *significance*.

To establish this new leading *significance* of *Landscape* as a borderland between Artistic/Cultural Performing Practices and Landscape Theory/Architecture has been the driving force of a long-term development project named *Meeting Places - Music Theatre and Landscape*, shared by SADA (Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts), SLU (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences), the University of Winchester, England, Malmö Academy of Music, and the ESMAE (Superior School of Music, Drama and Performing Arts), in Porto, Portugal.

Based on the experience of *Meeting-places project*, the main goal of this singular new specific research carried out within the larger EOA_LAB project¹¹ is to experiment this new

⁸ Pythagorean universal harmony, for example, uses a mimetic relationship with a supposed rational celestial harmony. Iannis Xenakis' "Symbolic Music" explores computer-aided compositional processes in order to research new formal and creative aspects in music composition (Georgaki, A. 2005)

⁹ The work of Bruno Suner and the work of Iannis Xenakis seem to bring to life an endless play of mimetic games between the music and the architecture. Music for a building, or building for the Music? The mimetic game between music and architecture is settled as a constant element of both architectures.

¹⁰ Deleuze, G.& Guattari, F. (1980, p. 161) explain: “*This is how it should be done. Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continua of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight, causing conjugated flows to pass and escape and bringing forth continuous intensities for a B(od)yW(ithout)O(rgans).*”

¹¹ European Opera Academy – Competence Center for Shared Education in Opera Training (EOA_LAB_WG2)

significance of Landscape as an ‘operatunity’ to produce flow conjunctions between the artistic and cultural performance practice processes and the communities’ history and the audiences’ development. In this sense, Landscape should not be seen just as a view or a scenery, but mainly as a potential receptacle for artistic, cultural and political happenings, once it is also formed by the customs, the tradition and the communities’ life who have inhabit it throughout history. Therefore, Landscape could also be seen as a common virtual time/space substratum for communicational actions of meaning production.

One of the main goals of this new project is also to explore how audiences can become participants and co-creators in the artistic and cultural happening rather than just spectators. It aims also to explore how from the different historical layers of the landscape one may build a new context for artistic and cultural actions, and how it may disclose in the people of the ‘audience’ a new significance of ‘full-happening’ and ‘thrilling moment’ by becoming participants and action co-creators, while the artistic performative deliverance and the semiotic process flow emerge as a freeing emancipatory experience.¹²

In this sense, whether structured by mankind or running naturally wild, *Landscape* may always be seen, and potentially work, as an ‘in-between’ *Matricial Khôra*, i.e., a virtual location or a potential spot where cultural events may take place and where artistic

¹² Erlingsdotter, Sara (2013) seems to corroborate this vision of the new significance of Landscape, in her statement in *Purcells’ Fairy Queen Opera Brochure of the Post-Graduated Opera Course of the ESMAE* (a collaboration project between SADA – *Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts* and ESMAE – *Superior School of Music and Dramatic Arts*, under Sara’s staging direction and Salgado’s artistic and musical direction): “*The project focus on how an artistic experience can face an experience of a landscape, develop new cultural and nature experiences and create new stage room and meeting places. The terms of the interaction between the audience and the actors change radically when one stops to consider the landscape as background/scenography for a stage event or performance and instead using the landscape’s characteristics and historical layers involving the location with people, resources, history, heritage, and gives the audience /participants relationship and status as co-creators. Can visitors and audience transform into participants and co-creators? And what does this change mean for the artists and the participants? The focus of the project is the meeting between music, theatre and landscape where actual, concrete experiences/events used as a crystallization point for the development of knowledge, experiences and development models in the borderland between performing arts and landscape architecture.*” Another good example of the so-called ‘operatunities’ happened in Finland promoted by a WG2 participant, Anna Kirse, under the name of Tree Opera. According to Kirse (2019): “*Tree Opera is an open-air high-quality interart piece that is based on recent scientific research, highlighting the ecological and cultural significance of forests. It took place on 17.-18.08.2019 in an old-growth forests in the area of Hyrynsalmi, Finland. The starting point for the contemporary opera piece is the entwined relationship of humans and forests and the conscious and unconscious communication that is based on it. The opera’s libretto is inspired by forester and author Peter Wohlleben’s book The Hidden Life of Trees, in which he asks if the trees are, in fact, social beings. He draws on scientific findings to describe trees’ similarities with humans.*”

performative events may happen.

Originally used to refer the territory outside the Ancient Greek Polis, the Greek word *Khôra* evolved posteriorly within the platonic philosophy to a concept designating a virtual receptacle, a potential material substratum, or even an interval of existence. For Plato, *Khôra*, is neither being or non-being, not sensible nor intelligible, but it rests between the two realms and it is like a virtual substructure or substratum, a potential sieve or riddled path through which everything passes, but in which nothing is retained.¹³

Building on this Platonic conception, Martin Heidegger (1959) refers also to *Khôra* as a "clearing" in which 'being' happens or takes place. Taking in consideration these conceptions, one can think, on a first stage, of *Landscape* as an available *khôra-receptacle* for Artistic and Cultural performances. But, inspired in Derrida's (1993) text – *Khôra* – it would be possible to go even further and suggest that *Landscape*, as we conceive it, borderland in-between time and space, could also be seen as something beyond a neutral space or a conceptual framing, as something like a radical *otherness* that "gives place" for being, providing a "space/time" where new artistic and cultural existences may take place, where new artistic/cultural performances may happen, and where the artistic meaning may be primordially produced, echoing what Julia Kristeva claimed as the "emancipatory activity of

¹³ Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman (1997) proposed the construction of a garden in the Parc de la Villette in Paris, which included a sieve, or harp-like structure that Derrida envisaged as a physical metaphor for the receptacle-like properties of the *Khôra*. The concept of the *Khôra*, distinguished by its elusive properties, would have become then a physical reality, had the project been realized... but, as the project evolved in de-construction of itself... the *Khôra* became its original fate: *a radical otherness, a non-place, something beyond a neutral space or a conceptual framing.*

the semiotic process” (Kristeva, 1984).¹⁴

Landscape, in this sense, is less a physical demarcated domain working like an ornamental ‘scenery’, but appears, invigorating, as the in-between time and space of a complex relationship between artists and cultural agents and the audience, and the artistic, cultural, social and political awareness, and expectations, that they may, or may not, share.

On the other hand, Gibson (1960, 1979) suggests, as referred, that in order to perceive a stable environment, one must be able to detect constant, invariant elements in the visual and acoustical array. According to this theory, the environment is rich in information about its own structure and dynamics, and this information is directly available to the perceiver. Despite the availability of the information that environment may provide about its own structure and dynamics, the “captured” information depends not only on the awareness of the perceiver but also on the *substrate* that one has at its own disposal. *Substrate*, by definition, is *a substance or layer that underlies something, or on which some process emerges, in particular*.

Borrowing the concept of *Subjectile*¹⁵ from Antonin Artaud (1988), Derrida (1998) argues that this Artaud’s concept works like Plato’s conception of *Khôra*: it is both *ground* and *support*. According to him, the *substrate* may have two *situations*, and can take the place of the subject or of the object – being neither one, nor the other. Finally, he holds that the *Subjectile* functions as a hypothesis concerning the relationship between the subject and the object of art and is a ‘*subjectile*’ itself.¹⁶

¹⁴ Maria Margaroni (2005) argues that the Semiotic Chora constitutes an attempt on Kristeva's part to explore a third space of ambiguous relationality in the context of which our transcendence to the "demonic" lies less "beyond us" than "in-between." According to Augustine Perumalil (2009), in *The History of Women in Philosophy*, Kristeva's ‘semiotic’ is closely related to the infantile pre-Oedipal referred to in the works of Freud, Melanie Klein, and Lacan's pre-mirror stage. It is an emotional field, tied to the instincts, which dwells in the fissures and prosody of language rather than in the denotative and symbolic meanings of words. Furthermore, according to Birgit Schippers' (2011) book on *Julia Kristeva and Feminist Thought*, the semiotic is a realm associated with the musical, the poetic, the rhythmic, and all ‘that’ lacks structure and structured meaning.

¹⁵ French word for *Substrate*.

¹⁶ Derrida J., & Thévenin, P., *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud*, Caws, Mary Ann, The MIT Press, 1998.

Taking into consideration this interpretation of *substrate* and bearing in mind the explanation that considers *substrate* a layer on which some process may occur in particular, one can believe, on that ground, that *Landscape*, as a borderland in-between time and space, has not always provided the same kind of information to the perceiver. This information lies *in-between* the subject and the object, *in-between* the perceiver and the perceived, *in-between* time and space and it has not always enabled the same meaning production and has not always had the same conjunctions of flow production, not even the same emancipatory activity of the semiotic process.

It changes, it is nomadic, it changes ways, it changes paths, it changes *lines of flight*, it changes borderlines, it changes through the evolution of times and according to the cartography of its occurrence.¹⁷

So, it may be assumed that *Landscape*, according to the different mapping processes throughout the ages, and over the multiple and diverse time/space rapports, has given place in accordance with this changing evolution to the occurrence of distinct and various *substratual processes*. Consequently, the constant and invariant elements in the visual and acoustical array available for the perceiver have also changed, evolved, and become differently perceived according to the emergent landscape-substrate within the process of meaning production and of semiotic flow engaged by the singular 'in-between land-scapes' connections, developments and becoming. In this sense, and in what regards the landscape performative (artistic and/or cultural) context, it is here proposed now the term *Land-Scape-Substratum* for what has been suggested, before, as *Matricial-Khôra* or *Subjectile*.

In this new *borderline* performative context, *Landscape* becomes more than just a physical domain, a view, or a 'scenery' where artistic and cultural performances are played or

¹⁷ A deep resonance with this can be heard in Brook's (1968) words and explanation of which categories do the *performances* fall, and from which the following brief resumé may be presented: sometimes It is *Happening*, and aims to break all the barriers of reason, sometimes It is *Verfremdung* and aims to bring a state of full awareness; or It is *Holly*, and makes perceptible the imperceptible, deals with hidden impulses and It is an act of communication between actor and audience produced out of the need to impart some emotion; or It may be *Rough* and deals with real events and actions that affect the audience; or It is *Immediate* and asserts itself in the present, and occurs when the audience is reacting to the happening on the stage, and allows for that transition between what is happening on stage and what is happening in their hearts at that precise moment.

re-presented to audiences. It becomes a *meeting-place* where the interaction between the performer, the audience and the structure of the work being performed is radically altered; a *semiotic process* in which all participants become expressively engaged in an act of deliverance and mindfulness, politically interventive and capable to enable radical transformations of the communities' life, of the space/time of their existence and, not less essential, of their development and emancipatory processes. It is, subsequently, a new significance process where music and musical structure, written and/or improvised, may be engaged within a completely new relationship between performer, dramaturgy, audience and *Land-Scape-Substratum*.

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New musical reality and contemporary education: curricular development and methodological strategies at European conservatories (focus on Music Theater, Interdisciplinary art, Vocal studies and Opera)

In this article I explore the needs and challenges for music education in relation to the changing reality of the music world with particular focus on opera, music theatre and interdisciplinary art. I give an overview of several innovative curricular development strategies at different European schools.

The music reality which underpins the classical musical education differs greatly from the contemporary situation. The differences are apparent in the musical expression, not only in the great variety of styles and genres, but also in the variety of conceptual approaches, technologies and forms of production. Hence, a wider range of musical specialisations are required in the creation and production of music theatre. Composers, singers, instrumentalists, directors, actors, visual artists and computer programmers need to be primed with a thorough understanding of current and innovative practices.

When we compare music from the XIX and beginning of the XX centuries to the post war era (ca. from 1950), the most significant change is the democratisation of the music scene. This entails: new ways of expressions, alternative forms of production, broad access to financial support. All this today results in a cultural landscape in Europe that is marked by a pluralism of expression, musical means and institutions. Parallel to the traditional orchestras, opera and concert houses, a growing number of contemporary ensembles, independent music /dance / theatre groups, interdisciplinary art platforms, each with very different artistic and economic strategies are influencing the production of music. This scene operates with its own set of dynamics - often more personal and swift - compared to the traditional formations - and this too requires new competences from the musicians in terms of communication and networking.

The task of the educational institutions today is to respond to all these changes and support students with adequate strategies. Next to the traditional competences such as mastering voice/instrument techniques, which are covered by the classical education or classical theoretical subjects, the new musical reality requires mastering extended vocal and instrumental techniques, a solid understanding of modern musical notation, a developed confidence in the creativity of the performer, the ability to understand / use technology, a broad cultural awareness, a willingness to collaborate, an aptitude to communicate and manage one's own career.

The traditional music education is based on the clear objectives: mastering the traditional repertoire. Crucially important are: a readiness to perform specific roles in an opera for the singers, well prepared orchestral parts for instrumentalists, classical orchestration skills for composers, etc. The efficiency of this type of education is based on a specific functionality which is best achieved in a linear progression throughout the academic studies. This process methodology based on repetition is not the best suited however to prepare students for contemporary music reality. The new methodologies (such as project related education, creative incubators, etc.) and new subjects (such as notation of contemporary music, new media skills) are often missing in the curricula of today's music education institutions.

The largest European project studying subjects related to higher music education, Erasmus Network for Music "Polifonia" (INVITE Working Group), has analysed descriptions of national systems for education in Europe; learning outcomes, recent changes and challenges in the music profession. Even if the focus is on instrumental/vocal teacher education, the 'Polifonia' project has a much greater reach and contributes significantly to the debate on methodology and curriculum development.

These are some of the insights from the Polifonia handbook "Instrumental and vocal teacher education: European perspectives" (1):

Student - centered education

the focus of the pedagogical discourse should shift from the teacher to the student, from the musical product to musical processes and from teaching to learning; increasing emphasis on developing the complete musician.

Student as a reflective practitioner

The rapidly changing environment makes it difficult to prepare instrumental/vocal education students with prescriptive instructions for all occasions and contexts. Instead, instrumental/vocal teacher education programmes should help students to learn to become reflective practitioners who are able to adapt their teaching according to the changing circumstances and needs of different pupils.

Student's autonomy

There is a greater emphasis on more creative approaches, on developing student autonomy, on teaching students how to learn. Learning is seen in terms of developing ways of musical thinking rather than merely the acquisition of specific skills. Generally, the student's musical experience is no longer limited to the individual lesson with the individual teacher, and many young instrumentalists engage in a range of group learning contexts related to their instrument and to developing their general musicianship. (...)

The teacher is regarded as facilitator and guide rather than as 'instructor'.

One-to-one tuition vs. group work

One-to-one tuition is often bound to a curriculum, approached in a systematic way and focuses on the different aspects of learning an instrument. These include the development of instrumental technique, knowledge of the repertoire, performance skills and knowledge of music theory and history.

Group tuition enables a holistic form of musical learning, integrating theoretical notions, technical matters, social interaction and musicianship in a single musical activity. It implies also a wider range of possibilities concerning repertoire and forms of musical interaction, thus encouraging fulfilling music making, peer learning, student involvement and motivation. Furthermore, group contexts represent a particularly convenient environment for the development of autonomy and creativity.

One-to-one and group tuition should not be seen in terms of polarities, but rather as complementary settings. Teachers might focus on one or the other, use them as options for particular targets and goals, or develop flexible systems in which the different settings play different roles in the process of music learning.

Theory supported by praxis

This division belies the important connection and interaction between theory and practice. Without this connection theory can lose its relevance to real working life situations and equally, practical situations need to be reflected upon, studied and questioned. Establishing a real relationship between reflection and practice could be challenging in courses where these activities are

approached separately, especially if we consider that theoretical thinking is in itself a practice and that practice always involves an implicit or explicit theory.

curriculum design as integrated approach

As was referred to earlier, output oriented curriculum design requires an integrated approach where courses, traditionally grouped in instrumental/vocal teacher education according to certain core areas (e.g. performance, music theory, pedagogy, supporting academic subjects), are no longer regarded as separate and discrete areas of knowledge, but seen as elements in a holistic learning process which will equip students with the competences necessary to function successfully within the instrumental/vocal teaching profession.

The embedding of informal learning

The embedding of informal learning within the formal context of higher education might be perceived as a paradoxical task, and entail a wide range of organisational challenges, but it is certainly an issue in which conservatoires need to become increasingly engaged.

Curriculum development can be seen as a collaborative process

Curriculum development can be seen as a collaborative process involving all staff teaching on a programme and requires good teamwork and pedagogical skills on the part of all the teachers, as well as an ability to make connections between and across the various courses being offered. Collaboration is called for in identifying and defining course content, teaching methods and assessment procedures. An integrated curriculum implies a pedagogical team elaborating and implementing the syllabus together, presenting a coherent study programme, accommodating the needs of students, allowing for personalised learning and helping students to organise their own learning. The elaboration of the curriculum is permanently reworked according to changing circumstances, new opportunities, specific needs, and commonly agreed goals. Interdisciplinary activities and theoretical discussions linked with practical implementations are part of the process. The process can also include ongoing input, as suggested above, from students, alumni, community groups and representatives from the wider music profession. It is important to point out also that the process is not only a reactive one, but is also proactive in creating futures for instrumental/vocal teacher education.

Extending the traditional boundaries of the music profession

There are many ways to learn about music which are not necessarily confined within the boundaries of music classrooms: people learn about music through spontaneous meetings with fellow students and friends; develop musical skills in band rehearsals and performances; create electronic music and spread it all over the world through the Internet, etc. The instrumental/vocal teacher's work in such contexts might reach even beyond the traditional boundaries of the music profession, involving project management, fund raising, entrepreneurship, networking and advocacy.

These insights strongly correlate with observations of our working group during the practical ISP labs in the frame of the EOA.

About this research

My investigation of the curricular development at different European schools revolves around these two questions:

1. which methodologies do we need, to develop the necessary competences for music students to become adept players in today's music scene?
2. how do the European schools find the balance between new and traditional educational approaches and programs?

In this research I took samples from the curricula of 13 European conservatories in a broad geographical and cultural scope, and reviewed which of these qualify as trend makers. I also included our EOA partners - Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and Conservatorium Maastricht. Unfortunately, the information on Porto's Superior School of Music and Performing Arts website is only in Portuguese language and therefore could not be compared. Not all schools publish their curricula online: this is the reason why such an important institution as the Conservatoire National Supérieur de musique et de Danse de Paris is not part of this research.

List of schools in this research:

- Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien
- The Royal Danish Academy of Music
- Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki
- Universität der Künste Berlin
- Hochschule für Musik und Theater München
- Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg
- Hochschule für Musik u. Darstellende Kunst Frankfurt am Main
- Conservatorium van Amsterdam
- Oslo National Academy of the Arts, The Academy of Opera
- Hochschule für Musik Basel
- Royal Academy of Music- London
- Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (LMTA)
- Conservatorium Maastricht

Research structure

Following objectives are taken as the filter for comparing the curricula:

- Student - centered education
- Student as a reflective practitioner
- Student's autonomy
- Group work
- Theory supported by praxis
- Curriculum design as integrated approach
- Extending the traditional boundaries of the music profession

This research shows some tendencies and helps to understand the strategies of European music conservatories, even though the list is incomplete, the sampled curricula indicate the current state of affairs.

The curricula of traditional subjects such as singing technique, acting and language courses, etc. appear to be similar in most of the schools, therefore they are not included in the comparison, except when they offer a praxis beyond the traditional scope.

Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien

<https://www.mdw.ac.at>

Observed: Master of Arts in Vocal Performance

Due to changing professional environments that have come to make high demands on operatic and concert performers alike, alternative career profiles are gaining in importance. Furthermore, a trend towards freelance work has been observable for several years now in the singing profession. The broad-based demands made by the areas in which singers work urgently necessitate that master's degree-level university training be made more flexible.

Increased attention must be paid to ensuring that singers who aim to perform in concerts and in operatic productions are comprehensively trained, while it is also necessary for singers-in-training to be equipped with additional practical qualifications in areas including operetta and musical theatre, professional choral singing, vocal ensemble work, mixed forms that include singing and language and/or bodily movement, etc.

New subjects / new competences in a free module

media expertise, contemporary music, introduction early music

The Royal Danish Academy of Music

Observed: Voice, The Opera academy

Teaching methodology

Individual teaching and, if relevant, class teaching in small groups. Parts of the teaching may take the form of project teaching.

New subjects / new competences in a free module

Entrepreneurship

Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki

www.uniarts.fi

Observed: Vocal Arts

As a master's student, you will acquire the extensive professional competence of a vocal artist in the main areas of classical vocal music. Depending on your interests, you can specialise either in voice pedagogy, oratorio music or lied and vocal chamber music and choose minor subjects and optional studies from the selection of the Sibelius Academy or the University's other academies:

Drama, Dance, Small-scale vocal music production;

The singer as an actor;

The singer as a dancer.

New subjects / new competences in a free module

Post-tonal music workshop

Introduction to writing and arranging music

Music of the 20th and 21st centuries

Project work / labs with students and teachers from different disciplines

Composition performance practicum: The Composition performance practicum is a working group that brings together students of composition on the one hand and of music performance on the other. Group members are required to write music for the group and to perform and study new

music from the perspective of a composer and a performer. Working methods also include improvisation, along with study and analysis of existing contemporary music.

School collaboration / integration with (external) partners

Deep integration with Institutions / programs such as the Academy of Fine Arts, Theater Academy and Sibelius Academy, Acting, Arts Management, Business in the creative field, Choreography, Comparative Dramaturgy And Performance Research (Double- Degree Master's Programme), Dance Performance, Design for the Performing Arts, Directing, Dramaturgy and Playwriting, Global music

Universität der Künste Berlin

www.udk-berlin.de

Observed: Vocal Arts / Opera

This study course offers vocally and musically gifted students an education which is in accordance with current standards for all-round vocalists, musicians and actors.

Extended subjects / new competences as part of the main curriculum

Interpretation of contemporary Lied
Artistic narration
New vocal literature and notation

New subjects / new competences in a free module

Next to the typical subjects the curriculum offers Modul 10 – Extended artistic praxis (contemporary music, contemporary vocal music, oratorio/concert, early music, vocal chamber music)

School collaboration / integration with (external) partners: lessons

KlangKunstBühne is a continuing education program offered by Berlin University of the Arts. It is aimed at all artistic disciplines. In courses lasting one week each, participants experience the possibilities of moving beyond the borders of their disciplines.

School collaboration / integration with external partners: projects

Art and Media, Art in Context, Costume Design, Creative Writing for the Stage, Design and Computation, Fine Arts, Musical/Show, Stage Design, Theatre Education/Drama, Sound Studies and Sonic Arts

Hochschule für Musik und Theater München

<https://www.hmtm.de>

Observed: Vocal Studies (BA), Concert/Art Song (BA). Liedgestaltung (MA)

Institut für künstlerische Gesangs- und Theaterausbildung (The Directing intensive course comprises a bachelor's and a masters study programme); Cooperation with the study programmes of the Theaterakademie (acting, music theater/opera performance, musical, wigs & make-up for stage and screen, dramaturgy, composition, scenography & stage design, culture criticism)

Extended subjects / new competences as part of the main curriculum

Acoustics / recordings, music mediation

Project work / labs with students and teachers from different disciplines

Workshops/Projects Contemporary music,
Workshops/Projects Old music

Collaboration / integration with external partners (projects)

Ballett-Akademie

Institut für Kulturmanagement und Medien

Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg

<https://www.hfmt-hamburg.de/start/>

Observed: Vocal Studies

School strategy:

Innovative Conservatory (Stage_2.0: Alsterphilharmonie): the Hamburg University of Music and Theater was able to assert itself in the nationwide funding competition Innovative University using the stage as a place of artistic knowledge transfer and social participation. As the only arts university in Germany, it is among the 48 sponsored universities that were selected in 19 individual and ten joint projects.

Extended subjects / new competences as part of the main curriculum

Notation software (Finale, Sibelius), Concert Lab 2022 (Entrepreneurship)

New subjects / new competences in a free module

Contemporary music (history of ideas), introduction in to the music technology, analysis of contemporary music, film music, Musikmobil, history of contemporary music, Online Marketing for Musicians, Sampling Video+Audio into a Filmkomposition.

Project work / labs with students and teachers from different disciplines

Innovation Lab: The Interdisciplinary Future Workshop.

In collaboration with various departments at the university, project-specific solutions are sought in order to implement new, interdisciplinary, interactive stage formats. The innovation laboratory sees itself as an incubator for innovative technical interfaces and new interdisciplinary stage concepts to support the interaction and cooperation of the various departments of the HfMT. Because the stage of the future bundles all the competencies available at the HfMT in order to benefit from the symbiosis and utilize synergy effects.

Collaboration / integration with external partners (projects)

Synergy in collaboration with: Operngesang, Directing Music theater, Regie Drama theater, Drama, Dramaturgy.

In more than 400 annual events, new artistic ideas and creative strategies are already being implemented, often as the result of research and learning processes. Numerous other project proposals with the participation of various departments of the HfMT are now becoming a reality: Transferbüro, Concert Lab, Dr. sc. mus., Innovationslabor, Forum: Stage_2.0, Elementare Musikpraxis International, KlangwerkStadt, Online-Lexikon der szenischen Künste, Moving Sound Pictures, Multifunktionsstudio, Online-Musikgeschichte der DDR, Die Musik Ostasiens, SPIIC, ZM4, Webcast.

Comment: the curriculum is quite traditional, but the school offers a very innovative approach for the project work.

Hochschule für Musik u. Darstellende Kunst Frankfurt am Main

www.hfmdk-frankfurt.de

Observed: Vocal Studies

General subjects

Professional orientation, Marketing and Management

Project work / labs with students and teachers from different disciplines

Szeneprojekte der HfMDK, opera productions

School collaboration / integration

„Ensemble Modern“ Akademie, Institute for contemporary Music IzM, KunstPAKT, The artist's body, Audio- and video production, studio for electronic music, cooperation with the Goethe Institute and HfMDK.

Collaboration / integration with external partners

Choreographie und Performance

Contemporary Dance Education (MA CoDE)

Burgfestspiele Bad Vilbel

Comment: what makes this school stand out is a strong partner for contemporary music: „Ensemble Modern“ Akademie.

Conservatorium van Amsterdam

www.conservatoriumvanamsterdam.nl

Observed: Vocal Studies, Early Music, Opera

New subjects / new competences in a free module

historical performance, early music voice as a subsidiary subject, jazz voice as a subsidiary subject, possibly within the framework of methodology, ensemble conducting

General subjects

Professional orientation, Marketing and Management

School collaboration / integration with partners (lessons)

Students are given the chance to participate each year in masterclasses led by internationally renowned artists. Recent guest teachers include Margreet Honig, Dame Ann Murray, Nelly Miricioiu, Ira Siff, Alexander Oliver, Claron McFadden and many others

Collaboration / integration with external partners (projects)

Dutch National Opera Academy:

Voice students who have finished their bachelor's degree programme, have the possibility to study opera at the Dutch National Opera Academy, a joint effort undertaken by the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and the Koninklijk Conservatorium in The Hague.

Comment: quite unique is the opportunity for voice students to engage in ensemble conducting.

Oslo National Academy of the Arts, The Academy of Opera

www.khio.no

Observed: Academy of Opera (MA)

Featuring world-class educators and stage facilities, the Academy combines individual, group and project-based training. Stage productions and concerts represent important milestones under way in the programme. At the Academy, students are allowed to work with professional directors and conductors and a full team of stagehands. This provides students with a versatile, practical education and a solid foundation for becoming professional opera singers both in Norway and abroad.

Many of the courses are process-oriented

Collaboration / integration with external partners

Academy of Dance

Academy of Opera

Academy of Theater Design art and Craft

Academy of Fine Art

Comment: many of the courses are process-oriented and, interestingly, more credits are given to the projects than to vocal training.

Overview of all the courses, with ECTS credits:

Year	Code	Course name	ECTS credits
1	OP401	Vocal Training	10
1	OP402	Coaching	10
1	OP403	Physical and Mental Training for Stage Performers	10
1	OP404	Acting	10
1	OP405	Stage Work and Productions	15
1	OP406	Language	5
Total ECTS credits, year 1			60

Hochschule für Musik Basel

<https://www.fhnw.ch/de/die-fhnw/hochschulen/musik/klassik>

Observed: Master in Solo performance, Contemporary music, Improvisation / open creative processes

School strategy

New Music is central to both teach and research at the Academy of Music. The Academy has an electronic studio, two ensembles – Diagonale and zone expérimentale – and two specialised Master's programmes in the performance of contemporary music and free improvisation.

New subjects / new competences in a free module

New Chamber Music

Project work / labs with students and teachers from different disciplines

Improvisation / open creative processes:

Instruction and self-study take place both individually and in the group. Regular public performances allow students to gain stage experience. In addition, projects in various formats are co-developed with other sonic space Basel study courses including performance in contemporary

music, composition, and audio design and are performed at national and international festivals. According to their personal interests, students also explore artistic work at interfaces to other media (e.g. dance, theatre, film, literature, installation).

Collaboration / integration with external partners (projects)

The Academy of Music teaching staff, students and study programmes all benefit from the close links between the institute and the Musik Akademie Basel, the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and its Music School, the Jazz Institute and the University of Basel.

The Academy of Music is an integral part of the dynamic and vibrant Basel music scene. Thanks to the School's excellent connections, its students are able to acquire valuable experience working on larger projects with the likes of the Theater Basel, the Gare du Nord, the Phoenix Ensemble and the Basel Orchestras.

Royal Academy of Music- London

www.ram.ac.uk

Observed: Vocal Studies, performance classes, Opera, Open Academy, Musical Theater.

Methodology

The classes provide a bridge between one-to-one tuition, masterclasses, and concert performances.

Opera

The two-year postgraduate course, which includes invaluable performance experience, is for exceptionally talented singers with the potential and aspiration to succeed as principals at the highest levels.

Our highly focused study environment includes one-to-one tuition, group classes and opera scenes, as well as three fully staged productions per year, which are regularly attended by representatives from opera companies, artist agencies and the national press.

Open Academy

Open Academy is the Academy's learning, participation and community initiative, working with more than 6,000 people beyond our enrolled students and staff each year.

Open Academy electives at undergraduate and postgraduate level are available to all students, offering seminars and workshops alongside hands-on experience in the field. Open Academy also offers fellowships to graduating students who will be the future leaders of this work.

Open Academy works closely with artistic and community partners, offering opportunities for students and project participants to explore making music together.

Musical Theater

The Musical Theatre Department functions as a theatre company. Our day-to-day acting, voice, speech and movement tuition is taught by current practitioners, offering a direct link to the industry, with projects and masterclasses being led by top professionals. Opportunities to perform throughout the year are a priority, enabling students to learn by doing.

Collaboration / integration with external partners (projects)

Artistic partners include: Wigmore Hall, Glyndebourne, English National Opera, English Touring Opera, Spitalfields Music.

Community partners include: Camden Music Hub, Tri-borough Music Hub, Resonate Arts, Royal London Hospital, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, City Lit, Awards for Young Musicians, IntoUniversity

Comment: the BA curriculum is quite traditional, but the master students have the opportunity to focus on performance classes.

Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (LMTA)

www.lmta.lt

Observed: Vocal Studies

Extended subjects / new competences as part of the main curriculum
Language of Music (the 20th Century), Alternatives of Music History

General subjects
Philosophy, Aesthetics

Collaboration / integration with partners
Faculty of Music, Faculty of Theatre and Film (also includes art management), contemporary music (composition, electronic composition, music production)

Comment: LMTA has affiliated Theatre and Film faculties, a well developed composition department and a master program for contemporary performance. However, there is no structured synergy or cooperation between these entities, neither in the form of curriculum nor in project activities.

Conservatorium Maastricht

<https://www.conservatoriummaastricht.nl>

Observed: Vocal Studies (BA)

Extended subjects / new competences as part of the main curriculum
Basic Digital Tools, Studio Recording Preparation, Creative Lab

General subjects
Your Art as a Business

comment: conservatory of Maastricht makes a part of the ZUYD
Master Vocal Studies & Master opera: no information about the curriculum online.

Comment: The ZUYD University of Applied Sciences contains a music and theater school, as well as: interdisciplinary arts, design and fine arts. Unfortunately no collaborations between them or curricular cross-over is currently being explored.

Conclusion

This overview shows that the classical one-to-one tuition is more or less uniform in all schools. What differentiate the Institutions is how much flexibility the school gives to the students to adopt their curriculum, what / how many innovative subjects are offered and how wide the network of internal / external partners is, in order to create the necessary interdisciplinary projects.

Some questions that arise: are all the partners listed on the website actively involved in creative project work? Does the school facilitate these collaborations? Is there enough openness from the teacher to allow different points of view? What are the financial possibilities? A long list of partners on the website does not automatically mean: many projects.

A handful of institutions stand out.

The Sibelius Academy, the Universität der Künste Berlin and the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München all have these features:

- the curriculum of classical vocal training is united with new subjects related to the contemporary music scene;
- extensive collaborations with local external partners is guaranteed;
- creative labs are credited as part of the curriculum.

The Hochschule für Musik und Theater München offers a classical curriculum but is very strong with its innovative approaches regarding the projects and it has an extensive list of partners.

The Hochschule für Musik u. Darstellende Kunst Frankfurt am Main and the Hochschule für Musik Basel are very strong in contemporary music. The question arises if there is a synergy between singing and instrumental departments.

An interesting addition for the curriculum of the singing students in Amsterdam is Ensemble Conducting.

The main focus of the Oslo National Academy of the Arts / The Academy of Opera is on project work: many of the courses are process-oriented and, interestingly, more credits are given for the projects than for vocal training.

Both, the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (LMTA) and the Maastricht conservatory, can do more to encourage interdisciplinary projects and specifically projects with affiliated departments.

Appendix

1. "Instrumental and vocal teacher education: European perspectives polifonia working group for instrumental and vocal music teacher training"

The group consists of the following experts:

Kaarlo Hildén / Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki

Natalia Ardila-Mantilla / Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, Vienna

Thomas Bolliger / Haute Ecole de Musique Genève HEM GE and Conservatoire de Lausanne Haute
Ecole de Musique CdL HEM

Jean-Charles François / Cefedem Rhône-Alpes, Lyon

Mary Lennon / DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, Dubli

Geoffrey Reed / Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester

Tine Stolte / Prince Claus Conservatoire, Groningen

Terrell Stone / Conservatorio di Musica di Vicenza "Arrigo Pedrollo", Vicenza

AEC Publications 2010, Handbook

<https://aec-music.eu/publication/aec-handbook-instrumental-vocal-teacher-education-european-perspectives/>



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Action, Participation, Meeting

– To come forward

Sirens and lament

The sound of the highway cuts through the botanical garden; sirens mix with plantings and serpentine paths of gravel.

But we are singing.

When police and ambulance sirens settle in Penelope's lament for Odysseus' war journey, then suddenly the text and the place, and the singing and the noise, become one. Wearing jeans and sunglasses, the Portuguese singer brings forth Penelope's desire for her partner, not yet home from war. Along with the sirens from the highway, this creates an association to the war refugees and their stories that I encounter in the news every day here in Porto. I shiver. I know that she, Penelope, could be one of them, one of us. The song and the music speak so well to these feelings of sadness, longing and waiting.

It is a warm September day in the Botanical Garden of Porto in Portugal, and I work with singers from the artistic college ESMAE in Porto. We investigate how the acoustic experiences of the singers and the audience are influenced by participation and creation of meaning in an artistic landscape event. How can we involve the landscape when we create an artistic event, and what does that imply for performing artists and the audience? How can we involve the audience in the artistic event, so that they become participants, co-creators, and what does that imply for the acoustic experience, for both the singers and the audience?

Penelope's lament is part of the opera "Odysseus's return" by Claudio Monteverdi performed in Venice for the first time in 1640. We work with parts of the opera, on the one hand with Penelope' lament for Odysseus' war journey, and her longing for his return, and on the other hand with the association between the Sea Choir and the Heaven Choir when Poseidon and Zeus decide to help Odysseus to come home. Fifteen singers and a theorbo player are involved. Our work focuses on the choir and the choir's function in relation to the audience, and how conditions for acoustic experiences are created.

The rooms of the garden

The botanical garden contains several different rooms. Here you can stroll along winding paths among planted roses and approach a paved open place, where a pond covered with water plants awaits. Behind the pond, a large planting of huge eucalyptus trees stretches. On the other side of a huge hedge, which forms a wall, a finely mowed grass area is contained with low hedges in the shape of an ellipse. In the past, the garden was much bigger and included a small forest. Now one of Porto's major motorways cuts the garden in two, and its noise permeates every plant, every person, every action and thought at the location.

This is our place; this is where we will examine how participation of the audience and the singers can affect the acoustic experience. Our work is part of a larger collaboration between four universities in Sweden, the UK and Portugal, where we examine how performing arts and landscapes can meet and create new impressions and experiences for artists, landscape architects and the audience.¹ What happens if we stop considering the landscape as the background of an artistic event, and instead involves the landscape and its people, its history and future, in the artistic event?

Together with the singers, I examine how they experience the acoustics of the botanical garden. They individually try different places, and share their experiences with each other. Someone feels free, another feels lonely, melancholic. A third finds it hard to hear his own voice. The highway takes over, and it is easy to feel drowned out.

We try to move together and sing choruses from Monteverdi's "Odysseus's return." The singers walk through the garden. They examine the various places' potential, given the acoustics and concentration. Finally, they opt for the lawn behind the high hedges, where the low hedges together form an ellipse. A place that accommodates both an outside and an inside. This will be the place of our work for the coming two days. To this garden room, we will invite the audience to participate, and to be involved in the choir's singing and in Penelope's longing.

¹ Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership. *Meeting place – Performing Arts and Landscape* carried out in cooperation between SADA, ESMAE, UW and the Department of Landscape Architecture at SUAS. 2014-2016.

To free yourself

In "Theatre of the Oppressed", in 1974, Augusto Boal, the dramaturg, director and educator from Brazil, writes about the human body as the main source of sound and movement. If you want to master the theatre's means of production, you must first know your own body in order to better express yourself, Boal means. Not until the spectator has come to know their own body and has the ability to make it more expressive, they can use other theatre forms, and liberate themselves from the spectator's role and take on the actor's role. Then, Boal says, you cease to be an object and become a subject instead.²

"I, Augusto Boal, want the Spectator to take on the role of Actor and invade the Character and the stage. I want him to occupy his own Space and offer solutions.

- By taking possession of the stage in the fiction of the theatre he acts: not just in the fiction, but also in his social reality. By transforming fiction, he is transformed into himself.

- To free ourselves is to trespass, and to transform. It is through a creation of the new that that which has not yet existed begins to exist. To free yourself is to trespass. To trespass is to exist. To free ourselves is to exist.

To free yourself is to exist."³

To free yourself is to exist. What does this mean for the meeting and for the location, for the participant and the artistic event? In my artistic projects and in my teaching, I ask myself how an artistic experience can meet a landscape experience and create participation of the audience, and how we can let the audience become co-creators and participants rather than spectators.

Boal goes one step further – he speaks of the oppression of the spectator, the audience: "The spectator must be freed from his role as spectator the main oppression the theatre is guilty of", Boal writes, and continues: "As a spectator, you are already oppressed, because the theatre offers you a world that is already finished and closed."

² Boal, Augusto (1979), publ. 1974. *De förtrycktas teater*, p. 16. Gidlunds, Södertälje.

³ Boal, Augusto (2000), publ. 1974. *Theatre of Oppressed*, preface, p. xxi. Pluto Press, London.

Boal argues that a spectator will be able to have their say during the play, but that is not possible when the dialogue after the show begins, the actors have the 'role of master of ceremonies' and everything is foreseen and nothing changes in the play. Thus, repression continues, Boal means, and therefore all forms of theatre should help the audience to get out of the role of spectators.⁴

Boal strove for a theatre that would help us to change reality. He created the forum theatre, newspaper theatre, invisible theatre – theatre forms in which participants in different ways were able to speak for themselves without the artist as an intermediary.⁵ *All forms of theatre should help the audience to get out of the role of spectators.*

As we are singing

In our workshop, we invite an audience to walk with us through the garden. Before they start, they may choose to walk with the Sea Choir or the Heaven Choir. These are in conflict with each other in Monteverdi's opera "Odysseus's return." The God of the Sea refuses to let Odysseus travel safely across the seas because of an injustice. In this way, he does not allow Odysseus to come home.

I choose to walk with the Sea Choir, and through an introduction and then an action, I get involved in the story and the location. We walk together, everyone is quiet. Once there, surrounded by the low hedges that together form an ellipse on the lawn, one of the singers steps forward and sings Penelope's anger at the fact that Odysseus has not yet come home after 10 years of waiting. She also sings her waiting for him and her longing for him.

Then more singers step in, one by one in the ellipse-shaped grass room, to sing the various gods' arguments for giving Odysseus help to get home. Finally, the God of the Sea backs

⁴ Boal, Augusto (1979), publ. 1974. *De förtrycktas teater*. Gidlunds, Södertälje, p. 176-177.

⁵ Yes, this must be read in context. Augusto Boal was the leader of the Arena Theatre in Sao Paulo 1956-71, was imprisoned and tortured during the dictatorship and right-wing regime in Brazil, was released and lived in Argentina until 1976, was active in most of Latin America countries, fled the right-wing regime in Argentina and travelled to Europe, first Portugal and then Paris. He ran underground theatre operations in Brazil and then in Argentina, where a discovery of the activity was associated with the risk of losing your life. With Boal lies a hope of the people's revolution, of rebellion against oppression, torture, injustice. He describes the situation of the poor in Brazil, Peru and Argentina, with clear, eloquent examples. He describes how people are imprisoned, tortured and killed in open places, in the square or in the street, in front of other people. A dictatorship that sets examples, to rule and to intimidate into submission.

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down. The Sea Choir and the Heaven Choir are united in singing about humans' need for grace and help. They enclose and surround me with their song; they are near me with their bodies and their voices. For a short moment, it is as if I am singing.

Yes, it is as if I am singing. I feel that I become part of the choir. I am standing there, silent, with the singing choir around me, being part of the choir. I am experiencing the choir singing and its presence, and it is as if I myself am singing, as if my body is breathing and my vocal cords are singing with the choir. As if I and the choir have switched places with each other for a brief moment. A meeting which is changing when a sensation, an experience, switches places between two or more people. It turns out, in conversations afterwards, that many in the audience experienced the same thing, side by side with the choir in the garden room. We have become a part of the choir.

The audience becomes part of the chorus. The choir becomes part of the audience. What happens when those around us are singing and acting as if they were us? Participation. Perhaps this is an obvious role for the audience: wanting to participate. We do not just want to watch. We want to participate. Is this power? The audience's power and potential?

Spaces as actions

In "The Human Condition", the philosopher Hannah Arendt writes about the conversation, the tone between people. She writes about dictatorship and people's common spaces, and about power as an option in contrast to tyranny and violence.⁶

"Power is always potential power and not something unchangeable, measurable and stable as force or strength", Arendt writes, and continues: "Every man has got a measure of strength to call their own, but no one actually possesses power; it occurs between people who live together and it disappears as soon as they disperse."⁷

And so this expression that she uses: the space of appearance. It seems to exist with Hannah Arendt as an utopia, as a wish more than a reality, a hope more than a description of reality.⁸

⁶ Arendt, Hannah (1998). *Människans villkor. Vita activa*. Daidalos, Uddevalla, p. 237-331.

⁷ Ibid. p. 272.

⁸ Ibid. p. 271-287

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The space of appearance, a space where people appear before each other and before themselves, and interact with each other. To come forward is to expose yourself and to expose yourself takes courage, so I understand Hannah Arendt's reasoning. Only when humans come forward *with* other people, they live and interact. If only for a moment, a short time.

The space of appearance. It is an awkward expression; but the content seems more beautiful. I think that actually, it is not a physical space but an action, an activity linked to a meeting place. And here, if I understand Arendt correctly, the promise, and permission and forgiveness are important. Without those, no one dares to expose themselves, show themselves, appear. In order to show courage, forgiveness and tolerance are needed. Perhaps there is a message of love - in the quest for forgiveness and permission, and for power. As if exposition is a prerequisite for taking power according to Arendt's thought. To be able to do something, you must allow yourself trials and errors, to make a fool of yourself, to get forgiveness and to try again. Being able to do something is to take power in a very positive sense.⁹The space of appearance is seen as a tolerant place for action, conversation and activity. I imagine this space as a social, democratic "space", or rather as an action. I imagine Hannah Arendt's space of appearance as a right but also as an obligation to act.

The free space is a space for everyone. A space for taking action. Perhaps this is what I am trying to create together with performing artists, the landscape and the audience – a space for taking action.

Boal highlights the individual action in what he calls "the poetics of the oppressed". The spectator should not give the role player authorization to act or think in his or her place but get into the lead role, alter the dramatic action of the play, try different solutions and discuss new projects. "The liberated spectator, who is a whole person, throws himself into the action!" Boal writes.¹⁰

The action of the performing artist. The action of the audience. What are the consequences if we as an audience, become participant rather than a spectator, active rather than passive, in the course of events? That I become a subject? What happens when I experience with my own

⁹ Arendt, Hannah (1998). *Människans villkor. Vita activa*, Daidalos, Uddevalla, p. 237-331.

¹⁰ Boal, Augusto (1979), publ. 1974. *De förtrycktas teater*. Gidlunds, Södertälje, p. 12-13.

body, am involved in acting and understand through experiencing, interpreting and bringing to life?

Participation and acoustics

When I have created artistic landscape events with music and singing outdoors, I have discovered that the audience can accept quite challenging acoustic conditions if they participate themselves. But if they have the function of spectators, listeners, if they are rather a passive audience, then they have problems with the outside conditions and require better acoustics. In a more participatory situation, I have seen the audience have a strong musical experience in roaring headwind, well storm, with pattering hail and tree branches breaking and falling down next to us. At the same location, I have spoken to audiences complaining about the audibility and acoustics when it was calm without sounds disrupting or interrupting the musical experience. In the first situation, the audience participated in a procession along with the choir and the soloist. In the second situation, the audience sat in a stage-auditorium setting with musicians and singers on a small stage in front of them, with woods and views of the ocean as a backdrop.

Perhaps the passive spectator places other demands on the acoustics and other conditions of a concert or an outdoor opera than the co-creative participant. The active participant *shares* the conditions with the singer, the performing artist, and is part of the meeting, which gives a different acceptance as well as another power. In this way, co-creation is important for the impression and experience of the audience, but also impacts on the acoustics or the experience of the acoustics.

If you participate, being a co-creator, you can also take responsibility and control of your own experience. You have not only a right but also an obligation; you are responsible of your own experience. The active participant takes part in the physical conditions of the singer, the performing artist. When we stand together in a group, and some of us make up the choir and are singing, and the rest are listening, also the bodies and the resonance of the bodies are included in the song and this should of course have a bearing on the acoustic experience. I feel the resonance of your body when you are singing near me.

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To share conditions is to meet. To meet is to come forward, to interact with other people. Only when humans come forward *with* other people, they live and interact. Perhaps the meeting and participation are more important for the acoustic experience outdoors than the technical conditions?

Nets and meaning

For a brief moment, it is as if I am singing, surrounded by singers in the botanical garden. Before this happens, we all have fostered friendships while playing, using strings in various colours. The Heaven Choir strings have different red, pink and beige nuances; the Sea Choir strings are blue, light-blue and green. More and more people get involved, and strings of different colours mix together. The choirs bring the audience, and together we constitute a net between heaven and sea, between red and blue-green nuances, between those who wanted to help Odysseus and those who refused. The singers are tying a net, they go from one side to the other and we, in the audience, are helping, we hold a string, we raise another, we release and we stretch. When the net is tied, the choirs unite as a tribute to mankind and ask for help and mercy. Then we are all moving clockwise; the net forms a spinning wheel of strings in all colours, and Odysseus and Penelope move towards the centre. In a duet, they sing their love for each other and we are being part of it. They are united. We have united them.

In the discussion afterwards, all participants experience that they hear well, and no one complains about the acoustics – whether audience or singers. How is it possible, I think, and ask more leading questions; Was it not disturbing to hear sirens cutting through? Was it not difficult to hear each other in the choir when you were so spread out and the noise was there as a backdrop? And the theorbo, could you really hear it?

So, a discussion evolves about being close to the singers and participating in the event and how that facilitates hearing from the audience's side. The singers say that it was much easier to hear each other and to be heard when there was a purpose and the audience was involved in the event.

And those strings, the links that we made to each other, they became as resonant vocal cords between us, I believe. A net, a web of ties, that resonates between people and becomes part of the landscape.

Sceneries and procedures

In his posthumously published book "Tillvaroväven" (2009) ["The web of existence"], the cultural geographer Torsten Hägerstrand questions habitual ways of looking at life and especially the landscape. He discusses the image as a description of a landscape and sees two main versions: the landscape – drawn, painted or photographed – and the topographic map. The landscape is egocentric, Hägerstrand means, when the content is arranged in a perspective way, as the landscape is seen as observed from one single vantage point. He calls this a *scenery landscape*, as the content varies with the observer's position. The topographical map is however designed in a way so that it does not have any corresponding centre. "You can say that there is a vantage point right above each point on the map", Hägerstrand writes, and continues: "And there is virtually no limit to the possible geographical extent. It has no horizon."¹¹

Hägerstrand goes further in his reasoning and asks for more ways to describe the landscape: "The forces of nature and live actors move and transform inanimate objects. Organisms are living through their life cycles with different periodicity and thereby providing the landscape with a changing force. Added to this are the changes resulting from migrations, and from humans producing and distributing their increasingly numerous artificial products." Hägerstrand believes that the perspective concept of scenery landscape needs to be complemented by another concept that can express the ever-progressing transformation – the *procedural landscape*.

"A scenery landscape is always a tangible reality in the moment around us, even if large parts of the content are hidden from the senses, and most parts are overlooked for other reasons. The procedural landscape must, however - despite its tangible configuration - remain more of an imagined quantity because of its degree of extension in time and space. It is the landscape of the all-seeing eye. It can be documented in some respects but not seen as a totality."¹²

Hägerstrand continues to highlight the difficulties of defining "landscape" and says that it is a complex, no matter how it is defined. When landscape is equated with exterior scenery, the

¹¹ Hägerstrand, Torsten (2009). *Tillvaroväven*. Forskningsrådet Formas, Stockholm, p. 264.

¹² Ibid. p. 268.

world below the surface of the ground is not included in the picture and trees and other vegetation are depicted without roots. Another limitation of the landscape concept is the fuzzy boundary between stationary and moving, Hägerstrand says: "The surface of the ground, vegetation and buildings are included but it is unclear whether animals and humans are seen as constituents or as visitors."¹³

In the concept of "the web of existence", there is no equivalent exclusion. "In fact, movement is attributed to everything, unless otherwise at least along the time axis," Hägerstrand writes, and proposes that within the concept of "the web of existence", we face distinct parts that are linked to each other in countless combinations where the participating organisms, from the smallest to the largest, are tangible life situations relevant to the continued existence.¹⁴ *The landscape as a web of existence, the landscape as a process, the landscape as movement.*

Also Boal speaks of the movement, the change. His aim is the spectator's movement from being passive to being active, from being the one observing to being the one influencing, well, *creating* the performing arts event, the role play, the theatre.

"Theatre is change, movement, and not just a reflection of what exists. It is transformation and not being" Boal writes in "Theatre of the Oppressed"¹⁵ *It is transformation and not being.*

Hägerstrand means that we, in order to understand the changes of the landscape, must broaden the concept from including only what is visible to encompass *all that is present* within a given area. Hägerstrand continues: "Then it will be most natural to consider the entirety only as interdependent flows through space and time." We cannot draw a line between what is static and what is changing, everything is in some stage of change, Hägerstrand means.¹⁶ *Encompass all that is present within a given area.*

Co-creative landscapes

The highway next to the botanical garden is testing your patience. The singers try to find areas in which they hear themselves and hear each other without having to confront the noise: next

¹³ Hägerstrand, Torsten (2009). *Tillvaroväven*. Forskningsrådet Formas, Stockholm, p. 269.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 271.

¹⁵ Boal, Augusto (1979), publ. 1974. *De förtrycktas teater*. Gidlunds, Södertälje, p. 101.

¹⁶ Hägerstrand, Torsten (1991). *Om tidens vidd och tingens ordning*. Gösta Carlestam and Barbro Sollbe (Eds). Statens råd för byggnadsforskning, Stockholm, p. 44.

to a wall, under a roof of concrete, in the circle of the pergola, along one of the serpentine paths embedded in high rose hedges. When they finally choose a place in the garden to invite the audience, the noise from the highway is there as an inevitable part of the landscape. How can we use this sound as a starting point and involve it in the same way as we involve the space of our event? We do presence exercises and listening exercises on the spot. We are listening, not just to ourselves and each other, but also to all the sounds around us. We are listening, not only the birds' different sounds, or a child's laughter while playing in the garden, which are sounds that we can easily perceive as positive in a landscape, but also to the roar of engines and sirens, cries and screams and boring talk.

"You had to drown the din of the highway in your song, in your joint singing." One member of the audience is talking to us afterwards and turns to the singers who sang Penelope's and Odysseus' love meeting at the end of the event. "This gave me such a strong feeling that there really is a war going on out there, or a boisterous, angry sea, and that you are joined in the middle of all this. Yes, despite all this. "¹⁷

So the sound of a highway has been embedded in the landscape and the artistic event, and has become an integral part of the acoustic audience. I am surprised. I have experienced it myself; I have worked to achieve this, and yet I am surprised. Perhaps this is where one of our challenges lies, to understand the landscape as sounds, the landscape as an event, and not just as a passive location. The co-creative landscape, the landscape as an actor.

View and web

Torsten Hägerstrand writes about the landscape as a web. When I directed performances in the landscape of Österlen, on a stage in front of the sea with the audience sitting on a hillside, facing the sea and the meadows and the mighty mountain Stenshuvud – did I use the landscape as a scenery then? Did I use the landscape as a view or the landscape as a web?

The web is in constant motion; the present is never static. The web contains the history, the present and the future at the same time. It is in constant motion. The web includes plants,

¹⁷ Professor Paulo Marquez, Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Porto University and Head of the Botanic Garden, Porto.

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humans, animals, but also buildings, things, well, gadgets. What happens if we, as performing artists, approach the landscape as a web?

We are included in the web. And the web, the location, is included in all of us. There is constant interaction. If we are there, we create the web in the present, in the history and in the future. We become a part of everything that is present. We influence the landscape, the place, with our presence. We change it through the artistic landscape events. So footprints, traces, , an event to add to past events are created.

Spaces or webs? Meeting spaces, meeting webs. Event spaces, event webs. Web better describes that there is a movement and a complex interaction between things, people, plants, animals, land, the sky, buildings, concrete, etc. A space brings connotations to floors, walls and roofs, to something that is more permanent, static, and established.

The concept of web can also be perceived as something solid, such as a woven blanket - it is weaved, solid and finished. But an event web, a meeting web, a co-creator web – such web is in motion in the present. Just as the performing arts are, and as Hägerstrand wants to describe the landscape. This is where we meet: the performing artist's creation where the present is an art form and a co-actor, and Hägerstrand's description of the landscape as a web of existence, which is in constant motion, as a moment that is never fixed.

In motion

Do not ask what you can do with the site, but rather what the site can do with you and what you can then give back – in a meeting. What happens if you start out from the site and the meeting with its people in dialogue, in relationship? The site – it can be a hillside in Österlen, a square in Sao Paulo, or a botanical garden and a highway in Porto.

At these sites, there is a web of events and people, a web of what has happened, what is happening and what will happen, and a web of living and non-living matters. How can we create an artistic event based on this web, in relation to it? Have we not all become co-creators and participants when we are included in the same web?

When we create music and theatre outdoors, we often begin by discussing and planning for the technical conditions. We start out from the stage indoors and transfer it in some form to the outdoor space. A view becomes a background, a forest becomes a backstage, though there is no backstage in a landscape; everything is a matter of how you move, how you approach a place. But if we instead start out from the landscape with everything that it implies: sound, light, smell, movement, historical traces, future opportunities, our artistic landscape event can be part of the changing landscape, the co-creative landscape. If we create meaning and participation with the audience, the technical means and the conditions can be complementary to our event and action in the landscape. In this way, the meeting itself becomes the starting point for the qualitative acoustic experience of both the singers and the audience. The audience's power and co-creation is a precondition for this.

The action of the site

Language philosopher and action theorist James Meloe writes about the site and the action, the activity. They cannot be separated. The site cannot be understood without the activity. The activity cannot be described, explained, without the site. He uses the movement pattern of a berry picker as example. How can you understand the movement of a blueberry picker, without the site, without the blueberry bushes? Removing the site from the action, the action becomes incomprehensible and difficult to interpret for those who are not familiar with the activity or have not seen a berry picker before.¹⁸ Another example is the area with permanent snow in the mountains in Lapland called "jassa". The expression and the snow area it is referring to are difficult to understand without understanding the activity that gave its name - namely reindeer herding. The activity, the act, cannot be separated from the site, the landscape.¹⁹

Meloe mentions the stone "Kveita", in the Norwegian archipelago, that has got its name because you can moor your boat, or step ashore, there. There were other and larger rocks nearby, Meloe writes, but they had no names because they were not used for anything.²⁰ A name of a site that originates from the site's function. When the event, the activity, does not

¹⁸ Meloe, Jakob (1973). *Aktoren og hans verden*. *Norsk filosofisk tidsskrift* Nr 2/1973, p. 135-137.

¹⁹ Meloe, Jakob (1988). *The two landscapes of Northern Norway*. In *Inquiry* 3/1988, p. 395-397.

²⁰ Meloe, Jakob (2003). *Steder*. In Eva Erson and Lisa Öberg (Eds). *Erfarenhetens rum och vägar. 24 texter om kunskap och arbete*. Mångkulturellt centrum, Tumba, p. 109.

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occur there, then the stone's name does not exist, and thus, strictly speaking, not the site either. The stone, yes. But it is not *that* site. We create the place through our actions, through the activity.

In meeting

The space we created in the botanical garden was a meeting place where we became involved in two people's destinies, whether we wanted to or not. Ulysses is a warrior who has committed terrible acts: he has plundered and burned villages, he has raped women, and he has murdered men, women and children. He is smart and strategic, and he has managed to deceive and torment Cyclops, the son of the God of the Sea. He is also a missed father and partner. Many are those who want to take revenge on him, and he has lost everything. He has survived a perilous journey across the sea and needs help.

We are told this story when we step into the Botanical Garden of Porto and follow one of the choirs. We are invited to take action and we build links between the different camps in the story. Through our activity, the meeting place was created, and only when links are built, Odysseus can unite with Penelope and come home. A lawn becomes a meeting place and a place for taking action, a place where Odysseus can expose himself and get help. But also a place where we, as the audience, can take action and come forward.

To meet is to dare to come forward, to interact with other people. In order to show courage, forgiveness and tolerance are needed. We create the meeting and the place through our action. We come forward.

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The quotations in the text are translated by Sara Erlingsdotter

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Title: When space becomes art: making sense of a random world

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse scenic performance within the concept of “social character” - as the materiality of the artistic discourse. In this paper, social space is considered as a scenic space, with the ability to trigger ephemeral events and to give us clues about the way individuals project and organize their personal path and make sense of their lives, by reinventing them. Today’s new artistic proposals give rise to a plethora of real and virtual spaces with the potential to become scenic spaces. In this sense, the social space has become a privileged place for artistic production and for theorization in the field of social sciences. There seems to be a semiotic correspondence between the concepts of “scenic space” (the physical space where performance takes place) and other “social spaces” where performance can take place. As such, space can be understood as an open narrative structure that reflects individual opinions and dramaturgies that, in turn, will contextualize a specific social moment. Thereby, we can put forward the idea that social and interpersonal memories play a crucial role in the creation of the scenic space. This is based on the assumption that the public space is a space where acting and performance in strict connection with the artistic discourse. Within this theory, we can argue that actions occurred in public spaces are subject to common rules that, in turn, are tied to series of performative rituals. In this sense, public spaces are spaces that emulate life and existence.

Image and social performance

Performing arts, as a cultural and artistic creation, structure and express the individual consciousness and specific social visions of the world. The performative phenomenon is, therefore, a symbiotic process that facilitates the articulation between the established knowledge and the existential experience (Goldmann, 1971; 1976). One of the privileges of artistic fruition is the possibility to experience a “double understanding”, i.e. being able to get lost in oneself and then to rediscover oneself through a cosmogonic reasoning that questions the world. Despite the scenic relationship established by space, it is the viewer who initiates “the game” and the said theatricality. When we attempt to analyse performing arts, and formulate proposals today, we must take two fundamental aspects into account: (i) the multiplicity of interconnected artistic identities; (ii) the growing specularization of social life in a “theatre of life” characterized by new paratheatrical rituals.

Nowadays, naturalism and expressionism are pushed to their limits. Human life (between the hectic pace of daily life and nightlife’s *reality show*) has become a potential scenic space. This attaches particular importance to the “social actor”, who takes up a similar role to that of the “scenic actor”. In fact, daily life and performance have never been so interconnected, hence our reference to two types of performance that use similar signs and conventions: the theatrical performance and daily life as a form of performance. To this extent, performance becomes a way of behaviour, a convergence towards the perceptual experience. In this way, the spectacle of the world is constantly reorganized according to individual perceptions and rationales. In other words, by attributing an image to the scenic processes, phenomenology becomes an action theory within the scope of the appropriation of the spectacle.

Phenomenological thinking is based on the premise that all phenomenological experiences organize “a whole”, with drawn contours hierarchically organized in relation to each other. According to phenomenology, the world’s unity, before being perceived by conscience as a reality or an identity, exists on its own, as a blueprint of the world that is not owned by the subject but to which the subject is constantly addressing. The most important achievement of phenomenology was, without a doubt, combining extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism in its notion of the world and of rationality. The phenomenological world is not the realm of the pure self, but rather one that emerges from the interception of the experiences of the self with other people’s experiences. Therefore, the “real” is something that is described, not built, therefore, perception cannot be assimilated through judgement.

Our perceptual field is subject to a plethora of fleeting tactile sensations, which should be analysed but not confused with dreams. The real is, hence, a solid fabric that does not depend on our judgements to exist and to make sense. Perception is not a science, nor a stand that is deliberately taken, but rather the foundation upon which all actions and phenomena unfold, which are then taken as assumptions by the Self. In this context, we should also talk about a multitude of other “selves”, who have different perceptions that result from sensorial experiences, the validity of which can never be demonstrated. As argued by Merleau-Ponty (2002; 2003), the spectacle of the world is constantly reorganized according to individual perceptions and rationales.

It should be noted that our perceptual presence in the world is beyond positive or negative judgement. As such, perceptual faith is older than any reasoning, it is how we experience the world with our body, it is an experience that we understand as “true”, regardless of whether it is visible or not. Therefore, perceiving and imagining are just two ways of thinking, and imagination not seeing or feeling but rather having an immanence of truth about what isn't seen nor can't be felt. The world is the same for everyone, to the extent that it is what we think we perceive and that, to us, that is the only truth. Perceptual faith is our surest form of contact and interaction with the world. As such, neither philosophy nor art can bring answers to the human anxieties. The questions they attempt to answer are older than our life and history, and most of them remain unanswered.

In this perspective, we don't need to experience things, the idea of having experienced them (the virtual image in its relation with everyday life) is enough (Levinas, 1991). Everyday life spaces become, thus, spaces of life simulacra. In other words, as the real social becomes a performance space, the social actor starts seeking a stage where he can create as many characters as he wishes. It is in line with these theories that Goffman (1974) refers to everyday life spaces as scenic spaces and to the social actor as a scenic persona. The social actor plays an “archetypal role” within a collective unconsciousness, (Jung, 2003) and is simultaneously a character (when moving about in a performative space).

Social actors are thus seen as interpreters who constantly recreate themselves through different characters (Goffman, 1974; 1993), similarly to the notion of the “theatre within the theatre” (Pirandello, 1990). In this perspective, Goffman (1974) argues that the notion of

social performance affects the subject's perception at two levels: (i) in the way space is perceived in its scenic logic; b) in the way space is sensibly inhabited.

Space configuration and everyday life aestheticization

The reflection on the creation of new scenic spaces is concurrent with the aestheticization of everyday life, which has begun to taking shape mostly after the 1970s, with the ritualization of production and consumption operations. In this "aestheticized reality", the artistic/cultural product operates as an essential symbolic element, that extends the limits of social behaviour by raising new aspirations, requirements and goals and by opening new doors into the future.

This phenomenon is inseparable from the influence of the *media* as new agents of socialization and cultural transmission. This seemingly simple realization has complex implications on the dynamics of aesthetical perception and on the uses of art in contemporary society since it creates new communication processes, which are increasingly developing in the public space. In his analysis of the power of the *media* Luhman (1982; 1990) states that, by operating as mediating devices, the media obtain an aesthetical and rhetoric power, acting as the designers of the public space where the actions and discourses take place. The media promote, therefore, the diffusion of contemporary society's aestheticization, in which artistic productions submerge. This means that Art is an important influence in the configuration of sociability. The ultimate goal — both for social groups (the viewers) and artists — is to build social, cultural and artistic identities simultaneously.

Art and culture play an important role in social life, where creativity is an ever-present cultural value and where being imaginative is a condition to be acknowledged as an individual. In fact, despite society's transition from a paratheatricity into a theatricality, the mechanisms remain identical, the difference is that in a (conscious) theatrical register the ability to transform reality is no longer experienced by the «social self» in action, but by the character created by the «actor self». The spectacular performance becomes a vehicle used by the individual to achieve another state of consciousness, to exorcize desires and to make sense of "the real". Nowadays, the social space has become a potential scenic place, subject to many representations.

As mentioned before, space can be treated as an aesthetic object, even without there being the slightest artistic intention. Space is a metaphor that promotes and influences an infinite number of intentions and acts, that depend on sociocultural conventions, discretion and taste. The social actor, as a body in action that inhabits a space, it is never the result of a conscious decision. We are not fully responsible for the Body image we create, it occurs randomly, it is shaped by external and circumstantial views. If we were responsible for our Body image, there would be no image, since it emerges, as argued by Jung (1998), from an unconscious representation. The image we project originates other images and this allows us to creatively develop our body image in daily life (Goffman, 1993). The aestheticization of everyday life spaces improves our knowledge of our body and about other people's bodies, within performance events that spark a representation of imaginaries.

The desire for interaction or life as a performance exercise.

The sociological discourse highlights two perspectives within the analyses of interaction. One perspective approaches interaction as the concrete expression of the global normative order, referencing the necessary adjustment among social roles (represented or complied with) played by social actors. The other perspective approaches interaction in a dramaturgical sense, where the social "inter-acting" operates through the reciprocal expression and negotiation of symbols.

In this perspective, social actors take on the leading role and create a "social order" within the restricted space-time limits. In both perspectives, there is a resource to the theatrical discourse in its dramatic sense. Social interaction acquires, thus, the value of scenic inter-acting, constituting an occasion to activate and create perception schemes of individual and social paths. This tends to renew the social order that was in the root of the acquisition of the dispositions. As such, all social interactions, from the most casual to the most complex, acquire a sense of "dramatic play", which is subject to specific rules. In that process, corporeality acquires a capital value, by bringing to the foreground the importance of the "happening", as a social practice that establishes a narrative between the social body and the event concerned.

Goffman (1974) argues that any social interaction involves an inter-performance (inter-

acting) of, at least, two social actors (socialized bodies), who build an interpersonal narrative in a dramaturgy based on pre-established settings, which, in turn, creates social logics, both synchronically and diachronically. These configurations and social constraints instil dialectical and ideological operators within the actors. They define the interaction context and the horizon of expectations and interdictions, with the resulting power logics and practical expressions of the representation of the game.

Peter Brook (1993) describes theatrical interaction on the same terms. In other words, if "the world is a stage", as Shakespeare put it, the model of dramaturgical analysis can be applied both to art and to social organization. In both fields, the individual consciousness of the performance act (and of the need of an audience to perform that act) is important. However, in the case of social performance, the audience is not only a spectator but also a witness. The audience, more than judging the actor's performance, will confer it an existence and, above all, it will confer a scenic presence to the actor.

The quality of our presence (whether social or scenic) is directly related to our horizon of expectations. Thereby, everything that happens at the performance level only acquires a mimetic and plausible sense through an articulation of significance. The articulation of significance attaches a meaning to the similarities with life, through the projection of meaningful schemes in the form of performance.

The desire for interaction (Goffman:1974), which implies a performer/character and a spectator/witness, produces a similar polarizing effect both on stage and in everyday life. There is always an exchange of roles between the performer (the promoter of the action) and the spectator (the witness of the action), and that inter-acting (interaction) is crucial for the development of a symbolic system.

Social actors, like scenic actors, don't just limit themselves to playing a role, they build a character as if it were their own existence; this implies that the character is a symbiosis between the role and the actor's materiality. In this sense, the character resides between the power of the act and the power of the action, and this tension is the force that defines the character's originality. In this process, space, as the primary place of performance, frees the social actor from life's implausibility.

Character: actants and actors

Performance contains, within itself, the mimesis and the catharsis, in the Aristotelian sense of the terms. In this perspective, the ritualistic and mythic art acquires a psychoanalytical status of "dream" and "imagination". To Ubersfeld (1998), performing arts are mimesis, since even in their distorted and abstract form they stem from everyday life and from the human being (imitating his passions, desires and fears), and, therefore, triggering the catharsis mechanisms.

Catharsis has the same function as dreaming; it bridges and exorcizes the desires and anxieties of the subconscious, as well as unresolved real life situations. This is without prejudice to those who "let themselves dream" because they know that a dream, just like a spectacle, is an illusion, they know they are safe even in the apparent face of danger.

Mimesis emerges from that abstraction, and it touches us because it is in the nature of human essence. This implies that the act of reception is not only complex but also dual. The spectator needs to constantly distinguish between virtual spaces of performance and real spaces of performance, in which he participates as a witness.

We can further add that, during the space/time span of a performance, there is another parallel coded reality that transcends fiction and the performance act (Pirandello, 1999). As such, characters exist in a different dimension, which are independent from interpreters and spectators but only are made possible because interpreters and spectators exist and validate that dimension. In this process, the first element of the (scenic and social) spectacular performance is the interpreter's presence. He is both an actant and an actor, and the character is at the origin of the entire discourse.

If we want to examine the character's path, we need to go back to ancient times. In Greek theatre, the *persona* is a mask. The interpreter and the character figures do not get mixed up. The character is independent from the interpreter, both in the text and in the author's mind. This is also Pirandello's (1999) point of view; in time, the character develops as a "psychologising" essence, and there is a growing unification between the character and the interpreter. Characters become perceived from a philosophical and idealistic human point of view.

Greimas (1973) also establishes a series of hierarchized and articulated units within the character, namely: actant, actor, role and character. The combination of these elements

governs the basic structure of the social and scenic performance. To Greimas (1973), interpreters are actants, in the sense that they are *mythemes*. This is related to the notion of archetype. By nature, the character plays an archetypal role while also being a social actor (when moving in a specific space and universe), who has to play a role.

Goffman (1974) argues that acknowledging the character as a social actor always implies the performance of other characters, which result from the interaction/inter-acting event. Social actors are, therefore, seen as interpreters who constantly recreate themselves through different characters (Goffman, 1974; 1993), which is in line with Pirandello's (1990) notion of "theatre within the theatre". It also becomes relevant to analyse how interpreters position themselves in this scheme since they operate on a dual and fragmented sense: as interpreters of a fictional space and as social actors - characters.

It is known that characters live in a constant emotional polarity, which drives their actions (just like in everyday life) and defines the multiple roles assumed by each character. The character is a "social actor" on a stage (whether scenic and/or social) playing one or several roles that, in turn, will determine the specific auxiliary functions of the action, just like in real life. However, these two situations are distinct, and the roles do not get mixed up.

According to Ubersfeld (1998), the contemporary notion of "character" is in crisis. This is partially related to the confusion that exists between the concepts of actor, actant and role, and to the fact that the character has become a conflux of functions, with no specific identity or autonomy to act. Since the beginning of the 20th century, we have seen the character being treated at an unconscious level, always maintaining the notions of "shadow" and "archetype". However, there has been a shift into a "representation of the unconscious", which was reflected in writing, performance and, clearly, in the act of reception.

In the 21st century, we returned to a catharsis tradition, to a performance that seeks mitogenesis, to the unconscious human shadow and archaeology, to a definition of art as a mechanism that structures the collective unconscious. Nowadays, characters are based on the notion of "social actor" and develop themselves within the psychoanalytic model – ego, alter-ego – which, in dramaturgy, translates as text – subtext. To analyse the contemporary social and scenic characters, we need to take the most subjective and affective possibilities into account (Pavis: 2000).

Ubersfeld (2001) puts forward a scheme to analyse the character, based on the assumption that the character is an intersection of lines and references that can only be analysed in light of a specific referential system and in a global interaction context. The author defines the following functions in the analysis of a character:

- (i) Syntactic function – characters are part of a syntactic structure that has a grammatical function, they always have the function of structuring the action;
- (ii) Metonymic and metaphoric function – characters can be a metaphor of several domains of reality or express themselves at a metonymic level;
- (iii) Connotative function – characters connote a series of meanings;
- (iv) Poetic function – characters are always an important element of theatrical poetics and the paradigm of that same poetics.

Ubersfeld (2001) also points out that characters (elements of differential semiotic determinants) always have two types of discourse: what they say about themselves and what others say about them. What is “said” is part of a psychological discourse, it lies between what it is said it “is” and what really “is”, between what we think others think of us and what others end up verbalizing about us. In this sense, it can be argued that the character, as the subject of enunciation, uses a semiotically coded - verbal and physical - language.

There are different types of discourse upholding a scenic relationship: the intra-scenic discourse (interpreter-character), the scenic discourse (inter-action between characters) and the extra-scenic discourse (interpreter/character-spectator/witness). The scenic enunciation comprises, thus: (i) a producing discourse (whose sender is the author) and (ii) a produced or reported discourse (whose announcer is the character). Two enunciation conditions can also be distinguished: (i) the real conditions of the scenic enunciation and (ii) the imaginary conditions of the enunciation, created within the performance. This process is true for both artistic and social performance.

We can also add that the process of getting to know the characters’ life is long and complex (Steiner, 1995); and we believe that, as characters grow older, i.e. are played more often, our knowledge about them increases. This means that characters are complex and, just like in real life, on a mortal plane, they need time to express themselves.

The moving body

Within the scenic context, the body has an infinite combination of possibilities and is permanently exploring the images it can create. This is the body's biggest secret on scene: by exhibiting itself in front of the other (the mirror) it becomes exposed and transitions into a representation. Although it is hard to separate representation from reality, and fiction from "the real", the fact that both universes follow similar rules, we should pay attention to the fact that the body, in a scenic context (even if it is a public space), is a body "on exhibition". The body "on exhibition" represents our desire to cross all established borders, by accepting new coded ways of being. In this sense, the act of exhibiting is an achievement of the body's possibilities, exacerbating to the limit all its performance meanings within the space.

As noted before, the body is used differently in everyday life and in scenic life. In everyday life, the body is constrained by social rules, and added techniques come mostly from the unconscious, with a functional purpose. Therefore, different cultures entail different body techniques and different memories. By contrast, in a performance, all natural and daily life gestures acquire an artificial nature, since they shift from an unconscious to a conscious and deliberate register. On stage, there is a constant worry about the dramaturgic sense.

As time passes and their practice evolves, interpreters acquire a sort of second nature; they develop a different neuromuscular structure that reflects a "scenic body". The power of the interpreter's movement comes from the energetic concentration of the elements that are fundamental to carry out actions, within a limited space and time. This necessarily results in disposing of all secondary elements. When the interpreter faces an audience, he feels the need to create a sense, to act something out, and he uses his body to do so. That behaviour-desire is referred to as scenic presence.

Regarding perception, the interpreter works with tangible and concrete tools – the body and the voice – but he also works with energy, something inherent, that pulses in the stillness of silence, a "though-power" that grows without a tangible expression in space. Interpreters have the inherent ability to expand the dynamics of their bodies, to build and recreate the body according to the scenic fiction in which they take part in. The same

process occurs in everyday life (Goffman, 1974).

Social actors create a scenic presence that is instrumental to the development of their characters. According to Gillibert (1993), in daily life, at an intrapersonal level, each gesture and action are linked to the truthfulness of the emotion that originated them. We believe in others for the truthfulness of their emotions, but the source of that truth is our own faith and, naturally, the degree of honesty that the other brings into his "acting". In other words, when in a performance space, the social actor (as well as the scenic interpreter) acts deliberately and according to the presence of an audience.

Performance involves two movements: perception and fruition. The interpreter/scenic space relationship is measured by a sensorial and fruition logic. "Social interpreters" are individualities who wish to communicate their inner world to the Other. In this process, the public space is an element of otherness that facilitates the meeting of the distinct interlocutors. Space sends "social interpreters" to a different inner dimension; this always involves a movement of connection with a certain Other (someone who crosses the same space) whom they do not know but who inhabit the same external universe. The greatest challenge is making the Other connatural to the "social interpreter", which will necessarily imply a movement of returning to oneself, a movement in fruition (Levinas, 2000).

The social interpreter/space relationship is a relationship of anticipations, of acting out roles, that only lasts for the duration of the performance. Social interpreters cannot describe their relationship with space, and they will never be able to project a future, because that same space-scenario is constantly changing, which is why the scenic appropriation of space is experienced as a fruition.

In this context, Pirandello (1974) conceives art as an extension of life. The author sustains that the illusion of a real world is as important as reality in a world of illusion. The spectacle (scenic or real) becomes an experience identical to Levinas's (2000) concept of fruition. Reality and fiction coexist, side by side, with no boundaries, in a conflux of imaginary and real spaces. In this process, the body is an important element since it is a symbolic, significant and semiotic manifestation.

The common belief that words can lie but not the body, is somehow *untruth* because by acting out we end up building a character that uses the body as a code (Goffman, 1993).

From this point of view, the body can also lie. However, the body in movement is, quintessentially, the space of stereotypes and no language functions without the stereotypes and clichés expressed by the body. These pre-coded gestures are the very thing that allows us to express our emotions. Since emotions are stronger, we have a greater need to use the body to express them. In fact, the body allows us to bridge the gap between what we feel and the limits of what we can express by words.

Stereotypes are, thus, a way of ensuring that others understand meaning. Even knowing that body stereotypes "steal" our individuality and the uniqueness of our feelings, by recreating clichés we are able to create a dramaturgy of affections and social interactions. The body is a screen that mirrors the Other, and this interaction becomes a "secret body". This phenomenon creates a "social body" that changes in collective interaction events, which asserts both its existence and its expressive potential.

In sum, the scenic presence of the body is a phylogenetic memory of the symbolic and cultural universe that takes part in the construction of an identity. The assertion of the stereotype in daily life's performances becomes an "aesthetical order". Through the dynamics of repetition and its consequent collision, body images become stereotyped, which allows the expansion of their semiotic and semantic potential (Jeudy, 1998). The body stereotype can, thus, be considered as the very foundation of aesthetics.

As mentioned above, the body is an aesthetic object that draws our attention to a continuous and revived illusion of performance. Even if it is commonplace, what we call aestheticism always brings us to a *habitus* of the body (in its interaction with space), as if the body was the very establisher of the subject-world interaction aesthetics. The assumption that the body is aestheticized in the social space is inseparable from the fact that the body is considered a semiotic system, given its ability to send scenic signals. As pointed out by Jeudy (1998) the body is constantly moving, with an aesthetic purpose.

Conclusion:

Intra-scene and Inter-scene

Western culture is dominated by the imperative of image: the conscience, as self-analysis,

seen as a mirror, involving reflecting mechanisms that are based on images. This mirror can, potentially, return less interesting images, however, it is our ability to act out what we are, and what others are, that makes the “real” plausible.

Image is an indispensable element of intelligibility, a requirement to live in society, and this is how we resist the *virtuality* of the real. The phenomenological becomes a full aesthetic fruition. If «seeing living» was, in its origin, a universalizing aesthetics; nowadays «seeing living» has become a practice that makes us believe that true fruition comes from the spectacularism of the world, more from a cognitive image of the real than from sensorial manifestations.

It is in this sense that Husserl (1992) speaks of an «ego-man» restricted by a body that perceives things. It is in the game of power between “body – emotion – thought” that the basic principles of the sensorial body reveal themselves. In fact, the body has an infinite combination of possibilities and does not limit itself to the “real” that is reflected by the mirror. The goal of the aesthetic exhibition of the body is to communicate and to enable, through performance, an intellectual reflection about fiction. In this sense, “exhibition” is an achievement of the body’s possibilities, exacerbating to the limit all its performance potential.

The aestheticization of the body in everyday life creates a body that seeks the casual look of the passer-by (the other). This demonstrates that there are multiple daily life events participating in the creation of the collective ideal of “the pleasure of being a spectacle”. There is no sociability without seduction and, consequently, without the acknowledgement of the body as an aesthetic object (our body and other people’s bodies).

In line with Goffman’s (1974) thoughts, we can claim that all our forms of representing the body reflect our way of life, as if the body were an independent character at the service of the subject who inhabits the character. The ways in which the body is aestheticized in daily life are implicitly determined by acquired cultural habits and by the repeated perception of works of art. At the same time, the images resulting from the everyday life experience of the body are the ones that, accidentally, interfere with the depiction of the body in the artistic discourse. Consequently, artistic representations of the body do not depict an isolated body but rather a vision of the world. This is why the body, as an object of art, is always a reference to stereotypes. The intention is not to “demonstrate” but rather to bring

forward all the contradictions that result from the tension between images and their depiction according to the common principles of an aesthetical ideal. The real becomes a symbolic operator and art becomes an object, which is open to a multitude of senses and uses (what we should see; what we want to see).

The plausibility lies in the “real” production of “fiction”. Everyday real life has become a transcendental and metaphorical object. Art has become a polyphonic document within a social world that is overwhelmed by images. We do not even need to experience things, the idea of having experienced them (the virtual image in its relation with everyday life) is enough. In this context, art frees itself from being a simulacrum of life and takes up the space of illusion and imagination, where a new human is reinvented without metaphors. The body “on scene” is interpreted as an aesthetic means to recapture a space of intervention, underlining the disjunction between the “real” and the “scenic”. A new way of thinking the phenomenon of the spectacular has emerged, where performance is not about representing reality but rather about an ideal everyday quest for the unsaid, through a deconstruction of life. The chronological order is belittled in favour of a logical order. There has been a shift from a system that imitates nature into a system that recreates the “thought system”.

This «everyday life art» comes in two perspectives: one that formally seeks art in everyday life; and another that seeks to transcribe everyday life in a linear way, as a raw material that is not subject to metaphors. The purpose now is that the artistic object becomes more like a realistic mirror of interpersonal relationships than of the space-time narratives. The narratives of the subject and his social interactions give place to new inter-subjective and intra-subjective narratives. The Aristotelian concepts of mimesis and catharsis are thus revived, not in a social dimension, but in a private and biographical sense. This is assuming that the traditional concepts of dramatic collision dissipate in the contemporary artistic creation, giving place to new the conception that the spectator should see the artistic object «as if it were real» and the creator should assume the artistic object as a «fictionalized reality».

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to discuss the concept of space as a site of ephemeral representations, giving us insights about random artistic performances. In this sense, one can conceive space as a representation of social relationships between people, which are mediated by images. Consequently, it is through a physical space that people organise their personal trajectories.

From this point of view, the actions that occur in public spaces are subject to shared rules within a known set of applications. Hence, the polarisation effect that happens on a stage also happens in daily life: there is always an interchange of roles between the performer (the promoter of the action) and the spectator (the witness of the action), and that interchange is crucial to the creation of a symbolic system.

There seems to be a semiotic and meaning correspondence between the scenic space (the physical space of performance) and other social spaces of representation. This paper proposes a phenomenological and aesthetic approach to "performative spaces", suggesting implications and

discussing the various performative places (concrete and fictional) as scenic spaces of symbolic interaction.

In doing so it confronts social-philosophical theories and multiple theatrical practices, proposing different ways of understanding the concept of performance as a phylogenetic and cosmological experience. It also questions artistic performance as an event that promotes an interruption of daily routines and creates different perspectives on how life can be interpreted.

Keywords: scenic space; performance analysis; performing art; semiotics; dramaturgy

Singing and the Expression of Emotion

A Research on the Performative Process of Opera Making

António Salgado¹

Since Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key* (1942) the idea of a 'similarity', or a 'homology', between the 'dynamics of music' and the 'dynamic qualities of feeling' has become an important topic of theorists and researchers all over the world:

"There are certain aspects of the so-called 'inner life' which have formal properties similar to those of music - patterns of motion and rest, of tension and release, of agreement and disagreement, preparation, fulfilment, excitation, sudden change, etc."

(Langer, 1942: 228)

Over the last decades, empirical research in musical performance (*Clynes, 1980; Sundberg, 1982; Gabrielsson, 1995; Todd, 1995; Scherer, et al. 1995, 1996; Gabrielsson and Juslin, 1996; Juslin & Laukka, 2000; Juslin, 2001; Cox, 2001; Wang, et al., 2014, 2016; Salgado, 2003, 2017; Scherer, et al., 2017; Shu, et al., 2018; Bota, et al., 201; etc.*) has revealed that musical creativity concerned with the expression of emotional meaning presents gestures (vocal and kinetic) that can be considered as the parallel of structures between two sets of processes: *musical processes* and *affective states processes*.

It seems, thus, that it can be accepted that a homology exists between the inherent organization and dynamics of sounds of music and the movements and dynamics of our affective life; and, between those and the patterns of movement 'whose general characteristics are similar to bodily movement symptomatic of human emotions, moods or feelings' (Shove & Repp, 1995:58).

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The portraying of emotions in singing is determined by a highly complex mixture of factors. Music, text, interpretation, context, voice technique and articulation, bodily movements, singer's personality and interactivity with the audience seem, altogether, to play an important role in the music-emotional expressive outcome.

According to Manén (1974) and Newham (1998), the evolution of Western Singing Art, mainly in last century, led us today to a state of almost complete dissociation between vocal tone and emotional expression. In fact, they argue, that at the very beginning of opera, singers were masters of singing having the capacity to express vocally different emotive qualities using distinct characteristics for each tone and for each vowel and consonant.

Historically, they claim, singing vocal technique was a musical exploration of the different vocal expressions for the different emotional states. So, in a practical way, there has been an exploration of vocal emotion in the performance of singing ever since opera was born in the 16th century. In fact, according to Manén (1974) and Newham (1998), *“whilst early singers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in Italy, were intent on mastering the arts of extending the different emotive qualities and characteristics of each tone and vowel, later singers, as the music evolved into more concrete, dehumanized and electronic sounds, began more and more to sought to master the perfection of a single operatic or lyric color of voice production, and to train to specialize in a single timbral quality”*.

Furthermore, the increasingly elaborate complexity of musical composition has led to a process of training operatic singers in a way which has become more and more concerned with the vocal technical demands of the music and less connected to the primal and primordial role of the voice as the expression of emotion, feeling and all different moods of human soul and experience. Indeed, Manén (1974) claimed that *“for many modern composers the voice provides simply one tone of a certain pitch in various intensities. Loud and soft tones have replaced changes of mood and of emotional meaning and expression. Quite on the contrary, in earlier times of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Italy, many composers of vocal music were also performing*

singers, and they composed with the understanding of these inborn laws of the voice, using exclamations of every grade and shade as the foundational material sound of their compositions.”

The Italian Art of Singing in early opera was based on the use of the exclamatory primordial vowels to produce colorings appropriate to the mood and the emotional content which the music was meant to express. Caccini (1601) also claimed that *“the exclamation—is a quite important means for moving the affect”*. The exclamation - the utterance - of the human voice of a primordial state of emotion follows common, innate and universal laws of all humankind. The utterance of contentment and joy takes place through the exclamatory vowel of pleasure (a), as in happy (*‘hapē*); the utterance of disgust and hate takes expression through the exclamatory vowel of hatred (ē) as in fury (*‘fyōōrē*) or hideous (*‘hidēās*); fear and horror through the exclamatory vowel of terror (ōō) as in spooky (*‘spōōkē*), and sorrow or sadness through the neutral shwa (ə), as in hurt (*hərt*); all these utterances emerged in response to the need for emotional genuineness and authenticity combined with musical precision and virtuosity.

Following these authors, singers, nowadays, have moved further and further away from the exclamatory vowels and their capacity to produce coloring as a means of interpretation of love or hatred, joy or pain, surprise, fear or anger. This capacity of interpretation keeps fading away as the technical requirements and adjustments needed to overcome vocal, technical and musical difficulties became the only challenge left. Loud and soft tones have substituted changes of vowels coloring and richness of timbre, and frequently singers today use only one of the potentialities of their vocal organ, one timbre, one color, according to their own psychological mask, it is to say, according to their voice category and voice make-up.

Newham (1998) and Manén (1974) made clear the crucial point that the extensive range of timbres possessed by early singers was not a ‘cosmetic’ trick of virtuosity but a vocal intrinsic capacity to master a wide range of emotions possible to express. Rather, *“the range of timbres or qualities was born out of the spectrum of*

human emotions for it is only from the primeval sounds and exclamations such as joy, surprise, passion, annoyance, anger, sadness, fear, and hatred which people use to express their inner feelings and reactions that the colorful timbres of early singing can emanate. The core principle of early singing technique rests both in the malleability and articulation of the resonating spaces above the vocal folds as in the basic sound uttered at the larynx level in the form of the exclamatory primeval vowels.”

The primary goal of tuition, therefore, according to Manén (1974) must be “*to re-establish this primordial relationship between vocal tone and emotion, without which the variety of interpretation is impossible. Fundamental in this respect is, also, the desirable co-ordination of emotionally colored tones with facial expression and gesture.*” Great theatre directors and actors (Laban, Delsarte, Stanislavski, Grotowski, etc.) claimed, in different ways, that actors should give expression to a wide range of feelings and emotions by means of bodily movement, posture, gesture, vocal and facial expression. Such training will assist the singer to be able to convey the different moods he/she is required to express and also to achieve the desired co-ordination between vocal tone and the external signs of emotion within the expression of an emotional state. According to Manén (1974), “*exclamatory vowels are vowels of phonation and they should be performed by the larynx without the assistance of the lips, like ‘ventriloquists’ vowels. They are primary vowels controlled by a primitive part of the brain and experiencing the primordial and basic functions of the vocal mechanism. The vowels of speech are social learnt replicas of the primary vowels of phonation, and they are called vowels of articulation and are controlled by a different part of the brain.*”

In order to help to reverse this state of things a series of exercises have been created and tried out within EOA_LAB_WG2 program.² The goal of the workshop now proposed, which was partially carried out in both ISPs of Maastricht and Vilnius, is to ‘experiment’, together with singers and other performers, a new approach to Opera and Opera-making that clearly offers a more emotional connected work of the voice and singing in music performance. Through body movement, improvisation and effective

² European Opera Academy – Competence Center for Shared Education in Opera Training (EOA_LAB_WG2)

methodologies to arouse emotion and emotional expressiveness, *Vox Ludos Workshop* tries to find a methodology to reverse a way of singing that to a crescent number of professionals of the voice reveals the actual tendency to use the voice ‘innocuously’ in opera, nowadays.

This ‘new acting of the voice’, proposed in the context of this workshop, will enable the singers and performers to better connect themselves with their bodies and with the others, with their voices and emotions, as well as it will bring them a better understanding of what should be the meaning and the act of making new opera, today.

Vox Ludos Workshop is a set of exercises that proposes a new strategic of voice, singing and body training approach which works complementary the traditional way of voice training and of singing teaching. This approach aims is to regain the emotional aspect of voice production supposedly present in the old Italian school of singing art and to promote new and intense recreations of old and new vocal repertoire.

VOX LUDOS WORKSHOP

Vox Ludos is a series of vocal and body exercises that aims to enable singers to connect their singing art with their voices, their bodies and their emotions. Within an improvising methodology, the singers will learn, from the personal and collective experience to express different emotions and moods through vocal sound, postures and body gesture. Based on Ideo-kinetic methodology, on emotional imagery and on evidence of performative cues of emotions within music structure, which are a result of Performance Studies Investigation over the last decades, a series of exercises will be suggested to the singers and the students of singing. This series of exercises propose the use of a set of music intervals (or short musical cells and/or musical phrases) and each singer participant will be invited to produce an emotional state using a sound-voice, an utterance based on a chosen exclamatory vowel, connected to a corporal gesture (body and/or face) or/and posture. This way, the singer will try to express and identify the intended emotion and the intended emotional meaning for him/herself or/and the others. This embodied emotion will be worked-out by the singer as a means of emotional communication among other singers and the audience. As a goal of the exercises, a

kinetic-musical monologue, dialogue (or multilogue) will happen through vocal gestures, facial expressions, body movements and postures intended to express the different embodied emotional states and meanings.

VOX LUDOS METHODOLOGICAL EXERCISES:

- I. **GET 'E-MOTIONAL'** - (IDENTIFY YOUR VOICE AND YOURSELF THROUGH VOCAL EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS) - Supported by the Categorical Approach of Emotion and based on the innate and phylogenetic continuity character of basic emotional expressions (vocal, facial and gestural) this exercise takes into account some of the most updated theories which consider that emotional expressions are not merely an expressive behavior but, rather, a pattern of neuro-muscular activity that constitutes one of the components of Emotion (Izard, 1971).³ This set of exercises proposes a self-awareness of the singer's ability to express through the voice and body gesture and posture the different emotions suggested in the exercises.

MATERIAL WORK: Basic Music Intervals, Cells and Performative/Structural Musical Cues for each one of the Basic Emotions (Happiness or Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear) chosen from excerpts from the vocal repertoire.

- II. **A FEW WORDS TO SING** - (IDENTIFY YOUR SELF AND YOUR VOICE THROUGH EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION WITH VOCAL SOUND) - Supported by recent research and by the latest contributions to the study and deepening of the comprehensive aspects of Emotion, the researchers came to the conclusion that it would be relevant to assume the categorical and dimensional approaches to emotion as a useful and complementary tool for the investigation of emotional content and emotional

³ Izard, C. E. (1971). *The Face of Emotion*. New York Appleton-Century Crofts.

expression (Baumgartner et al, 2006).⁴ This set of exercises aims to contribute to a broader and more comprehensive approach to the expression of emotions within the musical and vocal repertoire. It, also, proposes a self-awareness of the singer's ability to express through the voice and body gesture the different emotions and moods suggested in the exercise.

MATERIAL WORK: Basic Music Intervals, Cells and Performative/Structural Musical Cues for Moods and complex Emotions (Love, Exuberance, Enthusiasm, Hope, Longing, Tenderness, Sorrow, Grief, Shame, Envy, Desperation, Despair, Rage, Hate, Anxiety, Worry, Panic, Terror) chosen from excerpts from the vocal repertoire.

- III. **WITH THE EYES WIDE OPEN** - (*IDENTIFY YOUR SELF AND YOUR VOICE AND YOUR SINGING PARTNER THROUGH EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION WITH VOCAL SOUND AND BODY MOVEMENT*) – This set of exercises is based on Six Viewpoints Theory and Practice (Overlie & Beavers)⁵ and aims to contribute to a broader and more comprehensive approach to the expression of emotions within the musical and vocal repertoire. In addition, this exercise also proposes a self-awareness of the singer's ability to express through the voice and body gesture the different emotions and moods collectively, using the movement as a way to create an emotional dialogue between the singers through the expression of the different emotions proposed in the exercise. The singer's own movement choices and emotional reactions depend on both his/her internal impulses and his/her reaction to the other singers. The singer will emotionally react to each new emotion or the change of any emotional state expression, searching to respond or to complement those of the others during the exercises. The exercise will start with a first level with the Basic Emotions (Happiness or Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear), and will develop into more complex or sophisticated emotional moods (Love, Exuberance, Enthusiasm, Hope, Longing, Tenderness, Sorrow, Grief, Shame, Envy, Desperation, Despair, Rage, Hate, Anxiety, Worry, Panic, Terror).

MATERIAL WORK: Basic Music Intervals, Cells and Performative/Structural Musical Cues for Moods and complex Emotions (Love, Exuberance, Enthusiasm, Hope, Longing, Tenderness, Sorrow, Grief, Shame, Envy, Desperation, Despair, Rage, Hate, Anxiety, Worry, Panic, Terror) chosen from excerpts from the vocal repertoire.

- IV. **DROPPING THE MASK** - (*IDENTIFY YOUR SELF AND YOUR VOICE AND YOUR SINGING PARTNER THROUGH EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION WITH VOCAL SOUND AND BODY MOVEMENT*) - With

⁴ Baumgartner, T., Esslen, M., & Jäncke, L. (2006). From emotion perception to emotion experience: Emotions evoked by pictures and classical music. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 60, 34-43.

⁵ Overlie, M. (2016). *Standing in Space: The Six Viewpoints Theory & Practice*. Kindle edition by Mary Overlie.

theoretical support from Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Sarah Kofman and Oscar Cesarotto, this set of exercises deepens the work of communication and expression of emotions carried out in previous exercises. Based on the function of the double in the compression of artistic creation understood as a playful act, this set of exercises articulates a conceptualization of masks in the theater, relating them as metaphors of artistic creation, and therefore of artistic emotional expressiveness. This series of exercises works with the variety of emotions understood as spaces of illusion, desire and fantasy in the artistic recreation of the interpreted vocal repertoire.

MATERIAL WORK: Basic Music Intervals, Cells and Performative/Structural Musical Cues for Moods and complex Emotions (Love, Exuberance, Enthusiasm, Hope, Longing, Tenderness, Sorrow, Grief, Shame, Envy, Desperation, Despair, Rage, Hate, Anxiety, Worry, Panic, Terror) chosen from excerpts from the vocal repertoire.

WORKSHOPS FEEDBACK DURING ISP MAASTRICHT AND VILNIUS

Feedback from the Workshops of Vox Ludos Exercises, in Maastricht Conservatorium and Vilnius Akademija

Claire Binyon and António Salgado

From the last workshops we had various feedbacks, positive in the sense that most of the comments were in the area of sensation “I hadn’t felt that before” or “this work opened up a specific area that I usually have difficulty with”. This I conclude is rooted in the process of calming down the system before it starts to work or assimilate new experience and then introducing new material slowly. So that in the first part of the session the time and space for the learning (or assimilation) is created in the whole person (body mind emotion) and in the second part of the session new experience (or data) is fed in on to a blank page (so to speak) thus having a clearer focus and impact within the receiver.

We also had an informal comment that it seemed we didn’t work together very much as the 2 approaches were a maybe a bit disjointed. This is in fact our objective in the workshop, to see what one method of work (awareness through movement) has to say to another method (emotional response and voice). In the long term to see if this makes sense in the training of the singers in ESMAE on a more systematic and long-term level. In fact, there were 2 thoughts that came from this comment. One was to see how to make the connection clearer and more central to the design of the second workshop, and two for the two different approaches to complement each other in a more explicit way.

The questions and thoughts after the first experience:

What is the objective when “exploring” material around connections between the body and the feelings? A connection that we can call e-motion: In fact, the connection is a body-mind-feeling connection and as such using the Feldenkrais Method as a methodology makes sense as it has at its heart the process of thinking sensing and moving as a constant loop best describing how we function as human sentient beings. The method promotes a balance between doing and listening. To enlarge this space can lead to more sensitivity and variety of response as well as creating a space for learning and creativity to take place - a type of poetic that the performer can later apply in making work.

How to connect to people/students/performers who understand their bodies principally through the functioning of the voice. If opera singers are in fact walking voices, and the voice comes from the body, how then to involve embodiment as a tool to elaborate and create more possibility for the voice. Usually, in theatre work, the performers are more used to these concepts of body, but the tendency is also to see the body and voice as separate. All the newest thinking in performance training is to reintegrate so we could say we are working through the body towards the voice and here in the opera world this is reversed, to work outward through the developed awareness of all physical elements related to vocal production in order to arrive to a more coherent image of the self.

If in the first workshop we started from the body scan which incorporates the distal (arms legs) into the whole image of the self this time we decided to start from the pelvis as a way of locating the center of the body and eventually to link this upwards into the breath and vocal production. Also, it made sense to use Singing with the Whole Self (*1) as a reference, in order to locate the method thoroughly in the area of voice work and to give some background for those who may be interested after the workshop. If the aim of the workshop is to explore the possibility of the 2 methods to work together then also for the student involved there could be further reading and study possibilities if interest was stimulated.

PLAN

1. Awareness through movement session – Pelvic Clock

Lying down and feeling how the pelvis lies on the floor

Appreciating the two separate sides of the pelvis (and hips and ribs) and understanding that they are different.

Imagining the pelvis as a clock and executing various movements using this visualization, Moving in quarter/half and whole circles around the pelvis/clock in clockwise and anticlockwise directions and noticing differences in the pauses between each “experiment” At the end again feeling how the pelvis is lying on the floor, what is clearer and if any of the sensations of differences have been resolved.

2. Applying this new sense of self in lying to the Voice and emotional connection, lying on floor working with vowels and emotions locating them in the body and in the voice.

3. Coming to standing and walking around the room, bringing the bodies back into relationship with space and with others:

a) FIXED POINT - Standing, feel pelvis, walk, run, stop (freeze) become aware of yourself in the space (making an image or fixed point) and then yourself in relation to others (again a collective image with scenic possibilities).

b) EXTENDED FIXED POINT - continue and when arriving to fixed point in the group start to extend your physical attitude in any direction towards somebody or something focusing on your reaction and changing attitude to what is happening around you.

c) VOCALISING FIXED POINT - add in the vowels and one of the emotions, first of all in order so as to pass through all 4 and then whatever seems more appropriate to the situation. Half the group do and half watch so as to introduce the idea of audience and a direction for the performers to focus in terms of image presented to the front.

4 developing the exercise above with 2 groups, in a proposal/reply exercise. Performing towards each other in an action reaction rhythm. Working as a group and supporting a principal performer who has the “solo”.

IDEAS;

As we are having a third meeting in Porto.... (that couldn't never happen due to SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19 Pandemic)

Some of the participants said it would be great to have some “bodywork” every day at the start of the day. In the meeting in Porto, as we have more teachers involved with this movement practice for the singers, it would be a possibility. We can maybe arrange this to happen, as an experiment for the opera lab.

From the experience this time and watching the work in the final exercise, I remembered another excellent game from the Acrobat of the Heart (*2) which is called weapons work which also works through body and voice and action response. More in pairs but would definitely be using elements from the first workshop (first crossings) and second workshop (extended vocal fixed point) in a third stage. This can be seen as an outcome - the possibility to experimental new way of working in the lab and to be able to directly see the next step for the work. In this way we always have an idea for the next time, which moves us forward and is in fact what these short experiences in the residences have allowed us to see and assimilate.

*1 Reference:

Singing with Your Whole Self, A Singer's Guide to Feldenkrais Awareness through Movement, Second Edition SAMUEL H. NELSON AND ELIZABETH L. BLADES.

Singing with Your Whole Self: A Singer's Guide to Awareness through Movement teaches performers to use the Feldenkrais Method of neuromuscular education to ameliorate problems of tension, muscle strain, and illness in order to obtain optimal vocal performance. With new lessons and chapters on kinesthetic imagination and neuroplasticity, this second edition features unique, modularized Feldenkrais lessons designed specifically to liberate function in singers and other voice professionals.

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The Opera Market between Tradition, Neo-tradition and Innovation.

Nicholas Payne, president of Opera Europa, states in his 2009 article „Trends and Innovation in Opera“ (The Business of Opera, Routledge 2015) that *„the public continues to seek out the spectacular experience which grand opera can provide“*.

Obviously, the fascination with and the passion for this art form is unbroken - despite frequent voices stating that opera is „outmoded, non-cost-efficient and irrelevant to modern society“. (Payne) How can we as opera makers provide audiences with this operatic thrill and what are the components necessary? How is contemporary opera reflected in the market? And finally, what conclusions can we draw for the market's future and what are the implications for opera makers and educators? Rather than trying to predict the future, this presentation will provide food for thought and inspirational hints.

Resuming my research „Same Old - Same New“: The Opera Market between Tradition, Neo-tradition and Innovation, presented at the ISP Vilnius in 2019, I continue to explore this data.

1. ANECDOTE IS NOT DATA

Why investigate art as data?

This exploration does not claim to be absolute or seamless. Nor does it advocate one over the other. It strives to describe the current market and illustrate its tendencies. My study „Same Old, Same New“, first presented at the SP Vilnius in 2019, spotlights the operatic repertoire catalogue, repertoire variety and density, and the relationship between so-called *traditional* and *new* pieces in programming. It displays the most programmed operas and composers. Why is that relevant? To quote Karen Stone, General Manager of Oper Magdeburg, previously Dallas Opera, Oper Graz: *„A huge part of the job of General Manager is analyzing the statistics of ticket sales over the last 5 to 10 years to understand: What is your audience interested in seeing? Doesn't mean that you can't take risks - you should take risks, because your most interested audience is often the audience who wants to come to the more ‚usual‘ pieces. But at the same time you need to offer something for the wide public. So, the only way you can get that information is by looking at the actual statistics (...). Anecdote is not data. „*

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1.1. Task

The purpose of this Strategic Partnership is to create an educational cutting edge for our students. We are called to present policy recommendations and initiate adjustments to our curricula. Art is not neutral. It is not objective, we need and want it to be opinionated, passionate, subjective and individual. Describing and observing the market however, in order to recognize development, a direction, a trend, a tendency in and for opera, needs to be done from a neutral perspective. I do so by exploring the numbers.

2. WHAT IS „THE MARKET“

According to Wikipedia there is a total of 1160 opera houses worldwide. That is from large national theaters to the smallest privately initiated stage. In Europe there is a total of 570 theaters, out of which Germany alone has 83, followed by Austria with 67 and Switzerland with 43.

(https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_von_Opernh%C3%A4usern).

In the context of this market research I have created the following graph to illustrate the ranking of worldwide opera performances per year (2017/ 18):

COUNTRY	PERFORMANCES	EOA	SP
Germany	7062	x	
Russia	1790		
USA	1607		
Italy	1509	x	x
Austria	1250	x	
France	1213		
UK	952	x	
Switzerland	765		
Czech Republic	746		
Poland	635	x	
Sweden	257		
Belgium	175	x	x
NL	123	x	x
Lithuania	103	x	x
Latvia	81	x	x
Portugal	28	x	x

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<https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/895228/umfrage/laender-weltweit-mit-den-meisten-auffuehrungen-von-opern/>
<https://www.operabase.com/statistics/en>

As it would by far exceed the capacities of this research to attempt a worldwide statistic analysis and prognosis, I will mainly focus on the German speaking countries as they still offer more than 190 opera houses, concert halls, festivals- thereby a large labour- and opportunity market for our alumni.

For our exploration we need to differentiate between two basic systems of operation as they both suggest different employment variations for singers:

- the repertoire system and
- the ‚stagione‘ system.

Some theaters (mainly in Germany, Austria, Switzerland) have own steady companies and therefore a stationary ensemble of singers. Often the programming reacts to the members of the ensemble- as they are paid a monthly salary with contracts over years, they are cast in as many roles/ productions as their contract allows. Only few specialized guest singers are contracted for specific repertoire (Wagner, baroque etc.) This model is referred to as „repertoire operation“. *„In the repertoire operated theaters, at a certain house, one can turn to the stock of available productions of works that has been created (over years or even decades) and thus encourages them to remain in the house.“*

Agid P., Tarondeau JC. (2010) Opera Houses: Order and Diversity. In: The Management of Opera. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230299276_2

2.1. Repertoire Operation

There are a number of arguments that strongly speak in favor of the repertoire operation. One of them being that *„...singers are for us a tool to establish customer loyalty. We attract our audience through high quality ensemble members who stay with us for three, four, five, sometimes even ten years before they decide to go freelance. We sometimes forget that singers are at the center of every performance and that without them music theater could not take place - an aspect that I sometimes miss in music reviews.“*

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This statement was made by Bernd Loebe, General Director of the Frankfurt Opera, Vice President of the German Academy of Performing Arts, Chairman of the German Opera Conference in an interview in November 2020.

(<https://themen.miz.org/musikleben-in-zahlen-opernrepertoire/interview-loebe>)

Daniel Herzog is Operndirektor in Augsburg. I spoke to him about his views on maintaining an ensemble and assuming the according responsibility. He states, that often directors and conductors do not seem to have the competences, interest and/ or the vision to select, guide and cast singers properly. „Today everyone has to sing everything,“. Herzog hereby addresses a development with serious consequences for young singers, as it combines versatility with wear and tear.

„The ability to keep a full array of singers employed through the year is due in no small part to government subsidies, another stark difference between the American and European opera houses. With local or national funding, the options present for an opera-house are considerably more varied. With this longer term casting in mind, companies must be comfortable that they choose repertoire appropriate to their talent pool. And this is where we begin to see the business benefits of the Fach system. When an opera-house contracts a singer for a two to three year engagement, they want to be certain that they are going to be able to do what they want with that singer. The Fach system categorizes opera roles from the standard literature (and now the not-so-standard literature). Richard Boldrey's „Guide to Operatic Roles and Arias“ (Caldwell Pub Co 1994) has over 3500 roles from more than 1000 operas) into specific voice types, and a singer of a specific Fach is expected to be able to learn and perform any of the roles associated with that type. This particular system provides both an assurance of reliable performances for the opera-house and a protection for the singer, become sort of 'town mascots' and the community will follow their development as they improve. who will not be expected to sing roles outside her Fach. (...) Here we need to emphasize how relevant it is to classify the singer correctly and to adequately assess which Fach he or she should be singing as it clearly serves the vocal health, reliability, sustainability and longevity of that singer in the business. It is clear the advantage to have contracted singers at your disposal for whatever role in appropriate, and the opera-house is free to select repertoire based on its existing company without the fear of not being able to find their principals. A general rule is that the more dramatic the role, the older and more experienced the singer should be. Wagnerian singers, for example, tend to be older than their Mozartian

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colleagues." („The Fach System: origin, function, and the dangers of perception." Dale DeWood, Dr. Kyle Ferrill, Graduate Vocal Pedagogy University of Memphis, Rudi E Scheidt School of Music

This suggests that as educators and landscapers in the operatic field we also have the responsibility of ‚breeding‘ the dramatic offspring: those singers who will later in their development realize the future performances of Wagner, Strauss, Beethoven etc.

The 2019 Bertelsmann Study "Opernsänger mit Zukunft" states that „A "healthy ensemble" that is intact in terms of size acts as a protective space and incubator for young singers at the same time. The ensemble model continues to offer the greatest possible development opportunities, especially for young singers, if the conditions of the 1980s and 1990s, with ensemble sizes of 25 singers at medium-sized state theaters, still existed. Where this is no longer the case - and this applies to the majority of opera houses - a completely different attitude is required, especially from younger singers."

Dr. Michael Klügl, Intendant der Niedersächsischen Staatsoper Hannover specifies in an interview for the same study: „Of course, that's why ensembles still have the advantage that, if it's a good theater, you can really develop in peace. The problem today, and this can be seen a lot in small theaters, is that singers are hired, but the content capacity, what one can actually play and may play with these young singers, that there is sometimes a lack of competence, and young people are burned out much too early. [...] In principle, much greater self-responsibility is expected of young singers than was the case many years ago." Ideally, the artistic and musical leaders will develop a vision for the individual singer, something Daniel Herzog finds lacking: „...I also know that many houses move away from ensembles in order to be able to develop more freely artistically." He still favors a steady team of singers and bringing in additional guests for ‚special‘ tasks like Musical, Baroque, etc.

Overall, we understand that within an ensemble, singers have the opportunity to explore repertoire and find their „Fach" while receiving a steady paycheck, security and a planning horizon- privately as well as professionally. Thus encouraged to actively explore and pursue a certain vocal/ artistic development which in return would secure the artistic and vocal sustainability of the singer. „The ensemble is and remains "the utopian moment of the theatre" (Thomas Ostermeier, after Kaempf and Merck 2017)" Bertelsmann „Sänger mit Zukunft" p.65.

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2.2. Stagione Operation

The other form of operation, the „stagione“ or „ensuite“ operation uses exclusively guest ensembles and -artists. Usually in station, there is no own orchestra and chorus (with exception of La Monnaie Brussels, La Scala Milano, Paris Opera e.g.) The ensembles are hired for each production. This also makes it possible to perform baroque operas and employ specialized early music ensembles for this purpose. Another advantage is that the number of employees behind the stage is much lower than at repertoire houses: an opera company will perform a certain number of performance of the same opera within a limited tunnel of time: for example Opera Zuid, 8 performances of Verdi's *Ballo in Maschera* within 2 months, with singers who were particularly auditioned and hired exclusively for this production. The stagione operation often relies on a large number of co-productions shown at different houses or productions that have been bought by other houses. This reduces the costs for the production of decorations and costumes, and the directors do not always personally supervise the revivals at other houses. This method also reduces the rehearsal times to a few weeks. Thus, Stagione houses are financially cheaper. The artistic advantage of the stagione system is seen in the fact that stagings do not remain in the program for years. This would guarantee an up-to-date aesthetic and that every production is freshly and intensively rehearsed with the whole cast and the orchestra.

Downside is, that the stagione does not offer a varied program. The opera house is closed for several weeks during the rehearsal phase. The same performance can then be played for several days or weeks (in extreme cases months or years), some companies take their productions on tour. It should be noted that, depending on the size of their role, singers will avoid to sing for two days in a row, as this might endanger his / her voice. You then need a second cast. Since a city theater or an opera house should usually offer a varied program as possible, the stagione system is not an alternative to the repertoire system for these houses.

<https://de.zxc.wiki/wiki/Stagionesystem>

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3. REPERTOIRE.

While exploring the present material I noticed a polarity of opinion when dealing with the understanding of repertoire innovation. The discussion seems to be almost bipolar: either traditional repertoire or new/ contemporary pieces. Is this the artistic reality? Is this the economic reality? And if so, how do we solve this ‚either/or dilemma‘ for us and our students? Allow me to insert here that the number of opera houses worldwide with an exclusively contemporary repertoire is zero, as is the number of opera houses with a half contemporary and half traditional repertoire. Nicholas Payne stated in the early 1960s *“the standard repertory covered two hundred years, from Gluck’s Orfeo to the (then) new operas of Britten and Henze. Today, it encompasses four hundred years, from Monteverdi’s Orfeo to Birtwistle’s, still classically derived, Minotaur. The breadth of this much richer heritage is demonstrated by the latest edition of Opera Europa’s Future Production Plans database, in which a cross-section of 52 companies lists 450 productions of 250 operas by 128 composers. The downside of this gain is that it can leave less space for new creations, which may be marginalized by the sheer bulk of opera’s magnificent legacy. Yet, the same database includes 40 new operas in its total, a proportion of 16%”*.

(https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057%2F9780230299276_2)

3.1. Data

According to the 2019 Bertelsmann Study „Opernsänger mit Zukunft“ we need to look at „the current repertoire and programming policy of the opera houses „ to see that there are significantly less performances.

„While the number of new productions has remained relatively constant for decades (around 650 per year with a fluctuation range of +/- 5%), the repertoire performances have declined continuously, sometimes dramatically, since the mid-1990s: in the operatic area by almost 20 percent to only 5,774 performances, for operettas by 60 percent (2015/16: 886) and for musicals by around 20 percent (2015/16: 2,458)“ (Deutscher Bühnenverein 1996-2018).

It is also revealing that the number of visitors per performance has not changed with around 700 spectators. The simple insight is: Fewer performances mean fewer visitors in absolute numbers (calculated from the ratio of visits and performances. (Deutscher Bühnenverein 1996-2018)).

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I will use the season 2017/ 2018 to exemplify the repertoire situation in the market:

- In this season 50 % of all operas and operettas worldwide are by the following composers: Verdi, Mozart, Puccini, Rossini Wagner, Donizetti, Bizet and Johann Strauss Jr.
- Among the 50 most played operas (which make 55% of all performances) only three are younger than 100 years: Puccini/ Turandot (1926) Kalman/ Gräfin Mariza (1924), Benatzky/ Im Weissen Rössl (1930).
- 7% out of all opera productions worldwide are compositions of living composer, of which 0,8% are women.

www.kulturraumverdichtung.de/saison-2017-2018-neuere-und-neueste-opern-nrw.html

From a total of

- 444 opera premieres
- 38 were re-productions of operas younger than 50 years (8,5%),
- 33 premieres were actually world premieres (7,4%).
- In total 16% of all premieres were pieces with a lifespan of 50 years or younger.

Therefore:

- 84% of premieres were repertoire that is older than 50 years, the average age of repertoire is 161 years.
- 77% of the 373 premieres of pieces that are older than 50 years, 287 pieces are 100 years or older.

When attending any opera premiere within the german-speaking countries, the chance to see a piece that is older than 100 years is 65%.

Out of these 65% we have 6 premieres each of :

- CARMEN/ Bizet and
- COSI FAN TUTTE/ Mozart
- DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER/ Wagner
- DREIGROSCHENOPER/ Weill
- DON PASQUALE/ Donizetti
- LE NOZZE DI FIGARO/ Mozart

7 premieres each of

- DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE/ Mozart

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- LA CENERENTOLA/ Rossini
- 9 premieres of
- DON GIOVANNI/ Mozart

In total, this means one out of 20 premieres was in 2017/ 18

- DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE
 - DON GIOVANNI or
 - LA CENERENTOLA (5,2%).
-
- Every 50th premiere was DON GIOVANNI (2%).

YOUNGER THAN 50 YEARS

- The average age of the 38 re-produced operas younger than 50 years is 19,4 years, included are the repetitions of world premieres within a coproduction.
- None of these re-produced pieces lived to see more than 2 premieres per season except for:
- A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE/ Previn
- MARIA DI BUENOS AIRES/ Piazzola
- ANGELS IN AMERICA/ Eötvös (1944) (the only composer in this listing that is considered to belong to the genre ‚New Music‘.

<https://opernmagazin.de/die-ernuechternde-opernstatistik-der-spielzeit-2017-2018-artikel-von-moritz-eggert/>

3.2. The Canon

Every year about 25.000 opera performances take place worldwide. In 2020 the Corona pandemic hit, a fact that led to an overwhelming number of cancellations of performances in productions. We clearly see the impact of the Pandemic in the numbers of season 2021/ 21. Overall, the canon of operatic repertoire has remained remarkably steady over the last decade. Here a comparing graph for the seasons 2015/16 to 2021/ 22 with the 10 most played / most-programmed pieces (including numbers of performances and productions) worldwide:

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2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22
La Traviata/ Verdi 862/ 166	Carmen/ Bizet 819/ 154	La Traviata/ Verdi 894/ 188	La Traviata/ Verdi 954/ 191	La Traviata/ Verdi 840/ 184	Zauberflöte/ Mozart 744/ 109	La Bohème/ Puccini 152/ 29
Carmen/ Bizet 783/ 132	La Bohème/ Puccini 719/ 113	Carmen/ Bizet 723/ 152	Carmen/ Bizet 785/ 148	Carmen/ Bizet 657/ 148	Carmen/ Bizet 675/ 137	La Traviata/ Verdi 123/ 27
Figaro/ Mozart 706/ 126	Zauberflöte/ Mozart 719/ 113	Zauberflöte/ Mozart 707/ 115	Zauberflöte/ Mozart 677/ 102	La Bohème/ Puccini 653/ 143	La Traviata/ Verdi 578/ 131	Zauberflöte/ Mozart 108/ 28
La Bohème/ Puccini 688/ 124	La Traviata/ Verdi 717/ 160	Tosca/ Puccini 631/ 131	La Bohème/ Puccini 637/ 143	Zauberflöte/ Mozart 633/ 113	Butterfly/ Puccini 503/ 113	Tosca/ Puccini 99/ 26
Zauberflöte/ Mozart 662/ 108	Tosca/ Puccini 559/ 126	La Bohème/ Puccini 618/ 114	Butterfly/ Puccini 564/ 115	Barbiere di Sevilla/ Rossini 616/ 131	Barbiere di Sevilla/ Rossini 486/ 105	Così fan Tutte/ Mozart 79/ 15
Butterfly/ Puccini 575/ 118	Figaro/ Mozart 554/ 99	Barbiere di Sevilla/ Rossini 530/ 110	Tosca/ Puccini 543/ 121	Rigoletto/ Verdi 579/ 130	Tosca/ Puccini 470/ 108	Carmen/ Bizet 76/ 19
Tosca/ Puccini 563/ 114	Don Giovanni/ Mozart 538/ 96	Rigoletto/ Verdi 500/ 107	Barbiere di Sevilla/ Rossini 493/ 110	Don Giovanni/ Mozart 559/ 117	La Bohème/ Puccini 465/ 100	Figaro/ Mozart 64/ 13
Barbiere di Sevilla/ Rossini 516/ 111	Butterfly/ Puccini 498/ 113	Figaro/ Mozart 483/ 90	Rigoletto/ Verdi 462/ 109	Figaro/ Mozart 534/ 106	Rigoletto/ Verdi 423/ 91	Butterfly/ Puccini 55/ 13
Rigoletto/ Verdi 481/ 106	Barbiere di Sevilla/ Rossini 492/ 116	Don Giovanni/ Mozart 435/ 95	Figaro/ Mozart 447/ 100	Butterfly/ Puccini 528/ 109	Don Giovanni/ Mozart 398/ 102	Barbiere di Sevilla/ Rossini 41/ 13
Don Giovanni/ Mozart 448/ 91	Rigoletto/ Verdi 453/ 99	Butterfly/ Puccini 402/ 103	Don Giovanni/ Mozart 412/ 89	Tosca/ Puccini 520/ 134	Figaro/ Mozart 323/ 88	9th Symphony/ Beethoven 13/ 11

<https://www.operabase.com/statistics/de>

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4. THE UMBILICAL CHORD

In her article for the paper „DIE ZEIT“ on contemporary operatic repertoire Christine Lemke-Matwey states that *„Opera is accused of many things. Expensive, sluggish, self-indulgent: Nevertheless, new pieces are being created all the time, currently more than ever before. Only a few remain in the repertoire. Once played, never heard or seen again - why? Without new scores and new music-dramatic concepts, there is no future. A society that encounters nothing new, in this field as little as in many others, could, thus released from its duty, quickly get the idea of also terminating the friendship of the old - simply because it is old and getting older and older. And because for the new, almost 40 years after Aribert Reimann's Lear and almost 20 years after Helmut Lachenmann's Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern, it simply lacks practice, sadly still.“*

(<https://www.zeit.de/2014/28/oper-repertoire>)

4.1. Innovation in opera is there, always!

When we encounter groundbreaking innovative and experimental operatic productions we mostly are taken to revisit titles familiar to us combined with new, daring mise-en-scene, in fresh musical interpretations. ‚Traditional‘ repertoire that has been re-framed, re-contextualized and therefore modified and transported, translated - to new times, to new audiences, to new aesthetics?

„If the opera repertory has hardened over time, innovation has not stalled, but become of a less risky kind, shifting to reinterpretation of works by way of new conductors and productions, and trying to reconcile pressures toward creativity and stability. New managers tend to promote moderate changes in repertory, without assuming excessive risks. While distinct in nature, opera manifests practices of risk management that seem similar to those observed in other industries.“

Stoyan V. Sgourev: The dynamics of risk in innovation: a premiere or an encore?
Oxford University Press 2012 on behalf of Associazione ICC

Some examples:

- Les Indes Galantes/ Rameau, and...some „Krump“ (yes, I thought this dancing style was Hip-Hop but it turns out that it is something even more new):

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfQJZ76WR0U>

(Opéra Bastille 2019, Clément Cogitore)

- La Traviata/ Verdi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ir8l-1IZLH8>

(Opéra Bastille 2019, Simon Stone)

- Die Zauberflöte/ Mozart

<https://youtu.be/J1xi1PkMuD8>

Liceu Opera Barcelona 2015/16 / Komische Oper Berlin, Barrie Kosky

- Le Grand Macabre/ Ligeti

<https://youtu.be/uS5-A61Ow4s/>

A co-production of Gran Teatre del Liceu, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Opera di Roma, and English National Opera rec. live from 'GranTeatre del Liceu', Barcelona, Spain, November 2011, La Fura dels Baus

But we also see new compositions, truly contemporary, commissioned by and taking place in established/ traditional venues:

- ‚L'Amour de Loin‘/ Saariaho

Worldpremiere Salzburg in 2000 - one of the most re-programmed operas within the contemporary repertoire (talking about what the audience wants). Here one of the scenes between Clémence (Dawn Upshaw) and Le Pèlerin (Monica Groop).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpkFJZDkqAI>

- ‚Matsukaze‘ / Toshio Hosokawa, based on traditional Japanese Nô Theatre. Commission. La Monnaie Bussels.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8S6JaoOSRfc>

- Here ‚Faustus, the Last Night‘ (2003/2004)/ Pascal Dusapin (*1955)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Uv0yWqrQR0>

World Premiere, March 2006, Opéra de Lyon

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- ‚Passion‘/ Pascal Dusapin (2006/08)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8sZ8boiiZs>

World Premiere, February 2012, Opéra de Lille

- ‚Les Bienveillantes‘/ Hector Parra (2019)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCQxakn6LLk>

Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, 2019- Calixto Bieito

- ‚Clémence (Susanne Phillips) from ‚L’amour de Loin‘ by Kaija Saariaho at the Met (2017) in rehearsal:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyNYMZ3cd_c

and in the performance:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKBm9mKWJVU>

What do all of these opera productions, old and new have in common?

Even if the programming would change dramatically within the next years, (which is not very likely as the number of quality contemporary compositions are still very limited unless they are being commissioned by established operatic institutions) still the singers are in need of the essential competences - above all:

Sing, sing, sing!!

5. THE SINGER - A NEW PROFILE?

5.1. The Heart of the Matter

The “arts” are subject to continuous change in society and this change of the “arts” in turn has an impact on organization and contents of arts education. As educators, we are called to react to these changes, to develop and adjust our curriculum to the new demands of the professional environment. Performing professionally as an (opera) singer is and always has been a highly-specialized field, unique and exclusive. There are numerous aspects that determine whether a singer will be successful - artistically on stage, as well as economically in the marketplace. What are these qualities and competences and how do singers acquire them?

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5.2. Ergo: The Voice is the Voice is the Voice....

Obviously, the need of a perfect classical technique to perform the opera of nowadays cannot be denied. Singers might be expected to imply some speaking voice (nothing new: operetta, dialogues in opera) or to use the voice in a percussive/ instrumental way (nothing new: character roles, persiflage, travestite role in opera). Still, composers want voices that project super well, especially if they include very complicated orchestrations, in many cases with a whole "army" of percussionists. The voice is expected to soar! And that is only possible with a reliable, sustainable and knowledgeable vocal approach. Supporting electives on concepts of extended vocal techniques and co-creation: wonderful - as an addition. Essential innovation in the curriculum needs to come in the form of extended acting training and body work in combination with enhancement of the vocal training in all its aspects. Independent productions can be interesting as well as artistically rewarding but are not exactly the most profitable. That is known. What will make our students self-sustainable performers is to be well-trained in the core aspects of the singing profession. Is the alternative scene growing? Maybe. Does that give reason to believe it will replace 'the market' as we see it in the data? Quintessence: new repertoire, old repertoire - core competence: excellent singing, strong acting, intelligent musicianship.

5.2.1. Free Vocality and Authentic Role Portrayal

Successful singers master their instrument, their voices are well-trained with a sound vocal technique, distinctive timbre and amplitude. Reliable. Sustainable. We expect intelligent and creative musicians who have become proficient in multiple languages. Ideally, they have developed exceptional acting skills, stage presence, timing and overall are charismatic and authentic performers.

5.2.2. Cultural Entrepreneurs

We observe, that Marketing has become an essential part in being a performing artist. As the pool of singers is continuously growing, it is easy for opera companies to hire, exchange and possibly replace artists. Contracts no longer are negotiated three or four years in advance but according to the immediate needs of the employer. This is possible because of the excess of singers on the market. The role of the agent as mediator between employer and employee, possibly even as impresario and career guidance counsellor has changed as well. Numerous agencies are flooding the market, often the 'agent' not only has no professional network but also little to no vocal expertise.

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Therefore, today's singers must treat themselves as independent artists, continuously reinvent and market themselves accordingly: they need to be cultural entrepreneurs. This involves a more sophisticated use of digital media and social interaction. Artists promoting themselves need to find a good balance between market-oriented and artistic-identity-oriented strategies. Yes, music is a vocation- nevertheless, it is also a business. We are therefore not only training future artists, but cultural entrepreneurs.

5.2.3. Resilience, Grit, Bounce-Back

Just like top-athletes, any artist and entrepreneur needs to have the training and tools on how to perform at their full potential at any given moment. Today's singer may no longer be associated with the same company for an extended period of time, giving them stability, financial security and the opportunity to grow and emerge. Now the cultural entrepreneur assumes full responsibility for the economical risk. Therefore, we need to provide them with the opportunity to train and develop strategies to bounce back from failure and let go of disappointments. As singers, we know this is an ever-evolving process, but the best entrepreneurs tend to be those who are more resilient, allowing them to get back in the game quicker. Mental training and performance empowerment need to be recognized and trained as crucial and powerful tools to last in the profession.

5.2.4. Physicality

Singing is an extremely physical and athletic activity. It requires strength, elasticity, engagement, lengthening, and grounding. Our body is our instrument. Why wouldn't we, as singers, want to find the most effective way to build the athletic and physical instrument? Also, we see that there are changing physical image standards in present- day opera- clearly, the good-looking, attractive performer is preferred. Why not recognize the issues, and develop stronger physical behavior to support the voice- and the career.

5.2.5. Kilometres on Stage

The best tools are worthless without an opportunity to explore, test and possibly re-evaluate and dischard/ replace them. More than anything our students need space to connect academic training to ,working in the field'. Education needs to create that junction. When we look at the modules the EOA offers we see that the most popular ones are those that offer fully-staged opera productions with

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orchestra. However, still the demand is by far larger than the supply. If opera companies want to hire young singers with the necessary bit of experience, they need to supply the young talents with opportunity to make these experiences. This is where the Opera Studios come in, the oldest already existing for 50 years (Deutsche Oper am Rhein). Following the study „Opernstudios im deutschsprachigen Raum“ there were 28 opera studios with a total 114 singers in 2017, all of them in union with an opera house. The smallest studio has one singer, the largest employs 16. Average age of singers is 25 years.

Focus of training in all studios is in the area of stage and includes:

- coaching (stage presence, scenic work) and master classes given by experienced stage artists.
- At some theaters German lessons for foreign opera studio members play an important role.
- In addition, there is also language coaching in various places, especially for the German opera repertoire.
- The practical aspects: Code of conduct when working in an opera house, contract negotiation, audition training, make-up.
- Musical coaching and Vocal training are less as they are covered in the master classes.

(Prof. Dr. Constanze Wimmer und Domen Fajfar, Anton Bruckner Privatuniversität, Linz: „Opernstudios im deutschsprachigen Raum“- Körber Stiftung

<https://docplayer.org/52016440-Opernstudios-im-deutschsprachigen-raum.html>

6. FINAL THOUGHTS

Opera is storytelling. Is a story better told if the music is contemporary? Is the narrative better when the format is traditional?

„Cultural managers are constantly faced with a dilemma - should the values of art dominate with entertainment secondary, or should art be used to serve the ends of entertainment (Lampel et al., 2000)? Hence, a key managerial task is finding balance between the imperatives of artistic freedom and commercial success,

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typically leading to innovation that recombines existing elements in a way that does not break existing conventions (Caves, 2000)."

Stoyan V. Sgourev: The dynamics of risk in innovation: a premiere or an encore?

Oxford University Press 2012 on behalf of Associazione ICC

The umbilical cord between the old and the new needs to be acknowledged and endorsed: by striving for inclusion and diversity, by reinforcing a colorful kaleidoscope of repertoire, artists and approaches: a new world repertory (Payne)!

„...it would be devastating if there were no more ritual places where we as a community could communicate about our emotions and affects without always having to talk about joining a sect or running to the nearest football stadium. Places for music, places for eyes, ears and senses: opera houses.“

(<https://www.zeit.de/2014/28/oper-repertoire>)

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EOLAB WG2

Opera at the forefront of the arts scene.

A plea for an informed look at innovative practices inside and outside opera

Although Opera sometimes seems to cherish its reputation of the ultimate 'art of the bourgeoisie', it actually is - and always has been - at the forefront of technological and artistic innovations within the live performance arts.

Why? 'It's the economy, stupid...' to quote Bill Clinton (who was quoting his campaign strategist James Carville)...

The huge production costs associated with an opera production, both enable and stimulate the use of new technologies that could broaden its public appeal. Emerging technologies which are out reach for experimental small scale theatre performances, become available for big opera productions first (think about wireless, spatialised sound reinforcement, subtitling, video projection etc...)

To some opera aficionado's horror, wireless mikes have infiltrated the top of the opera's houses, if only to enable live (or not so live) broadcastings: 'go to the Metropolitan at the cinema' is an international succes. New opera creations sometimes embrace electric and/or electronic instruments, sometimes necessitating the use of amplified voices in the slipstream. This amplification in return enables new ways of using the live voice in opera... This drive for innovation is also present at a 'pure' artistic level. Opera wants to profile itself at the forefront of the Arts. Against all odds, these innovations imply artistic changes in how to deal with them: they will slowly become part of the 'repertoire'.

At the same time, opera cherishes its repertoire. The bulk of what is performed today are creations from dead composers, re-enacted by very living singers, musicians, conductors, stage designers and directors. All of them mirror themselves into an overwhelming tradition. As such opera today combines an extremely conservationist approach with extreme innovation, often in the same house - even within the same production. An extremely innovative approach to the mise-en-scene can be happily married to a very conservationist approach of the music in repertoire pieces.

This makes Opera a very political art form. It is one of these rare 'high-brow' art forms where approval and disapproval is vocalised very explicitly. A challenging staging at Bayreuth guarantees a stampede of reactions at the applause (and Booming), rivalling a football game. I vividly remember the applause of a regular performance of C(H)OEURS, an operatic performance directed by Alain Platel at Teatro Real de Madrid. Animated (and quite heated) discussions erupted at the third balcony¹ between fan's and foes of the piece, continuing onto the streets long after the presentation. Controversy between the new and the old is at the heart of the opera practice. One shouldn't take these musical revolutions lightly - after all Belgium was founded on an opera presentation².

^{2 2}The presentation of 'La muette de Portici', an opera by Daniel Auber on August 25, 1830 allegedly triggered the Belgian Revolution. It hasn't been performed a lot since then.

This vivid opposition between the old and the new is reflected in music education. When I ask conservatory students for their favourite contemporary opera composer, 'Béla Bartók' is always a solid contestant. Unfortunately, he died in 1945. The living repertoire somehow seems to die in an ever shifting past. This reluctance to embrace the real, living, contemporary art practice of music theatre, feels very strange, especially in an educational context, aiming at creating the future. As if Aperghis would somehow be infectious for Mozart (I guess it was the other way round). In this weird embrace of the past, one seems to forget that radical new staging of the repertoire are at the centre of opera practice of today. Musicians, conductors and directors re-invent this repertoire on a daily basis, often nourished by the avant garde of contemporary arts (both fine arts and theatre).

Opera is inherently an intermediate art form: it combines the artistic practice of theatrical story telling with classical singing techniques. Intermediality is defined as the art practice of incorporating the creative strategies of one medium, into another medium. That's exactly what opera has done from its existence. It uses theatrical (and nowadays even filmic) strategies of storytelling in classical music.³ As such, opera has always embraced the best of these (and other) art worlds. Top designers (often from fine arts), top directors (from theatre, cinema or fine arts in general) are flown in for top productions, alongside top singers and conductors. It is the noble art to impress and surprise on every level... Even on a technological one...

Most technological revolutions tend to disguise themselves under the radar: the birth of the copy machine, the mobile phone, the networked society, the birth and dead of the fax machine... all had a huge influence on the organisation of our society, and happened without too much fuss at birth...

That's also the case with innovations in the staging of opera's (both contemporary and repertoire). The invention of the live-filmed-conductor on a closed TV circuit, had quite some impact on the dramatic possibilities of staging an opera, but nobody even bothered to invent a name for it. Subtitling (or rather 'sur-titling') opera's created an important (but almost unnoticed) shift in the perception of opera as a dramatic medium. Suddenly every sentence sung - in any language - became immediately understandable for the general public. Staging and singing an opera had to cope with this new perspective of the public on it's drama.

In this paper we argue that these 'quiet revolutions' have quite some dramatic - in every sense of the word - repercussions on how we should train our future (and present) singers. We also will argue that these changes are not only relevant for experimental, contemporary or new small scale operatic practices: they influence almost every opera performance, both repertoire and contemporary alike.

This practice of importing 'the newest and the best' from neighbouring art forms, is at the heart of today's mainstream opera practice. Newly emerging and sometimes highly experimental composers are asked by big opera houses to write innovative new opera productions. Top directors from theatre and cinema are imported by the biggest houses to stage both new and old repertoire classical opera productions. Top fine arts artists are engaged for the set design of these productions. These huge productions are often (but not always) more innovative than the small scale productions from newly formed opera companies.

One could even argue that opera renews itself from the centre of its core business, and not only from the emerging margins. In theatre, small experimental outsider companies tend to feed the innovation of the bigger, established houses. In opera, it's almost the other way round. Why? Here again, It's economics: as these emerging companies in the margin are financially less established they are more dependent on the immediate acceptance of their creations by their audience. Opera is an inherently expensive art form. Taking a big, experimental risk can be fatal.

Big opera houses have a well established practice of importing their innovation from their neighbouring art forms. The list of radically experimental theatre directors (and stage designers - often from fine arts with no staging experience whatsoever) involved in the staging of big (both repertoire and new) opera productions is quite endless. These are often the 'prestige' productions of these houses. They are their prime showcases. As the saying goes: if you want to see what the top of contemporary theatre has to offer, go to the opera.

³ We will not dwell on the semiotic differences between opera and musical, as this seems to be a very fruitless endeavour. Let's be satisfied with the (very un-satisfying) definition that everything that defines itself as an opera within an operatic context is an opera. Period.

In practice, these boundaries between the centre and the margin of opera art practice, are becoming highly permeable for singers, Great singers are traveling from one production to the next, from repertoire to new creations, regardless the size or age or style of the opera house involved. That makes the need for an open view of a wide variety of art practices even more important, not just for the 'experimental opera singers' (which is in my experience an almost non-existing category). Opera is a living and evolving art at the centre of the arts. Century old classical opera pieces are often staged in very innovative ways, and sometimes world creations are staged in very traditional ways. The innovation in the art practice of bringing an opera to the stage, is not linked to the size of the opera house or the novelty of the music. It is at the heart of the opera practice. So it should be at the heart of opera education.

For singers, working in established classical houses as well as in newly formed companies, this implies that some knowledge of what's happening in these neighbouring art forms, is vital for their career. Acting isn't a fixed skill: it is an ever evolving art that embraces all kinds of different approaches, from a realistic, cinematic approach to an abstractly choreographed ritual and everything in between. It evolves with the evolutions in the neighbouring arts such as cinema, fine arts performances, dance and theatre... An acquaintance with these art forms is vital for a future opera singer.

The numbers of singers with fixed, long term contracts in established opera houses are still quite substantial, but in a decline. Lots of new singers travel from production to production, from more traditional to more innovative ones. It has to be remarked that the bulk of these opportunities - both in the context of traditionalist as contemporary stagings - still come from more established classical houses. But this doesn't imply that these houses only produce traditionalists (whatever that may be) interpretations of repertoire. The opposition between an old fashioned, fixed, conservative art practice in the established opera houses and a vibrant alternative market with an innovative, collaborative and flexible art practice, is a false one. The art practices at both ends of the scale (from big established houses to small emerging companies) are incorporating a mix of traditionalist approaches, as well as innovative practices.

Opera, as an art in between, has always been swift in incorporating both talents and art practices from new, emerging media and art forms. It has been the first in embracing sub-titling in their live performances (a practice borrowed from cinema and television), long before theatre started doing the same. This practice has quietly revolutionised opera as a medium, as the dialogues (and frankly the story itself) became immediately understandable for all spectators. Up to that moment, opera was an art form for well prepared specialist spectators who knew (and even memorised) the story, way in advance of the live event. As such, subtitling will undoubtedly have a profound effect on the democratisation of this art form. If one takes a photograph from the third balcony audience (which I tend to do), the myth of a dying, over-wealthy audience falls into shambles. It is simply not true⁴.

This innovation challenges the dramatic qualities of the singers: more and more stage directors ask (sometimes quite unknowingly) a 'natural feeling' and 'honest' acting style which can be extremely challenging while singing at full strength. The exaggerating acting style of the past is less in demand. So at least, young singers should be acquainted with very different acting styles and strategies. Ranging from film style natural acting (Peter Sellers, Romeo Castellucci), over dramatic and larger than life acting, till more coded and abstract forms of acting (Robert Wilson). In all these different styles, singers should realise that the public is understanding every sentence of the plot. More than ever, one can't get away with playing the general idea of the scene. As a singer, one has to engage dramatically with the subtext of every sentence, every word.

As a pedagogical methodology, we propose that young singers should be trained in at least some of these different acting styles. They should have some knowledge of the top of the international staging practice (ranging from traditionalist till experimental stagings). An intimate knowledge of (also contemporary) fine art will help to build a common frame of references which can be shared with the stage director (and conductor, for that matter).

The use of 'new' media such as video projections and (live or recorded) generated computer imagery in the set designs, first emerged in big and expensive opera productions, quite long before they did hit the stage in theatre. The reason is economic again: opera as a very expensive art form, is used by artists from neighbouring art forms, to try out new art practices which are financially impossible in their own, 'native' art form. How to deal with live camera's on stage as a singer, isn't an exotic skill to train nowadays.

⁴ Always choose the second or third balcony at opera performances: first balcony is way too expensive, parterre is for the horses and their drivers.

The 'conductor-on-the-screen' is another well established staging practice that aspiring opera singers should learn at school to use in their singing practice. A more natural feeling style of acting is rather hard to achieve when both protagonists look straight at the conductor in the pit, instead of engaging with each other. This requires a built-in 'trust' with the 'conductor-on-the-screen' which can only be learned by practice, from the early days at the opera school on. Organising an acting strategy by a singer involves plotting a visual line-of-sight from one 'Conductor-on-the-screen' to the next. How can I act this scene without losing track of the conductor? Somehow we too easily consider this as a small detail which should be learned on the spot, during the rehearsal of a production, while it's something which can be quite easily simulated in a school situation. A closed circuit consisting of a fixed camera and 3 screens, will do the trick and provide a vital learning experience for the young singer.

Without trying to be overly provocative, one could argue the same for 'amplified singing'. Although 'non-amplified' singing stays at the heart of opera, more and more staging practices require amplification. Even more so for televised opera's (live or not) which are a growing market. Especially since Covid19 forced the public into finding their way to the 'opera-on-the-screen'. These practices have quite some implications on the singing and acting techniques required, again regardlessly whether it concerns a staging of a repertoire opera, or a contemporary world première.

For young singers, this is an amazing challenge and opportunity alike. If they want to prepare for a career at the top, they should know and somehow critically embrace the newest art practices both from new technologies as from neighbouring art forms (theatre, cinema and fine arts). This goes for careers both at the established opera houses, as in the emerging opera companies. And as all techniques: these require knowledge building and training, from early on. It's no longer the icing on the cake: it's part of the cake itself. As opera educators, it's becoming part of our core business.

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RECOMMENDATIONS – PORTO

To re-think Opera Today rises a series of controversial issues and important new insights that should be taken in consideration in our desire to make professional opera nowadays and in the necessity of preparing young artists to the new artistic challenges of the new labor market emerging from the variety of the new fields opened by Contemporary Opera. In this sense, the concept of Opera appears, nowadays, as an 'empty shell' where a series of different 'insights' of - making opera today - may diverge and diversely emerge.

1. Complementary and Extensive Performance Practices Skills -

Students and young singers' SKILLS required to approach the needs created by contemporary opera and the new labor market

Making opera today suggests that young singers, performers and opera students, generally speaking, during their education process, and in addition to the traditional training, should be given the necessary tools to be able to cope with the new challenges of performing contemporary opera. According to inquiry made to *higher education music institutions (HEIs)*, the new skills identified for the singers are:

“body work, new ways of relating to the body and the emotion, text/language work, improvisation technics and vocal/ear extended technics. Entrepreneurial, social and communication skills were also pointed out as important extra musical features to strengthen the student's profile, i.e., new vocalities, new ways of relating to the body and the emotional being, new ways of relating to the text and its semantics and to the space, and new ways of relating to the practice of collaborative and co-creative work – last, but not least, the necessary tools to deal, when necessary, with the market itself,

by self-managing and self-promotion and publicity, out of the main circuit of the big theaters, and of the grand opera circuit.” It’s noted that these new skills should be “built on the fundament of core skills” and that the profile of the young singers should grow a wider general artistic drive and an updated insight of the social and political positioning of opera of the 21st century transforming their mindset.” (PEREIRA, SALGADO-ESMAE: 2021)¹ & (SALGADO-ESMAE:2021)² & (SALGADO, BINYION-ESMAE:2021)³

2. New and Alternative Circuits of Opera Making

i) Out of the Black-Box

“Opera has been facing, since its birth, challenges and transformations that are consequence of the positive or negative interaction with the socio-cultural and artistic context of each moment in history. Surprisingly, in the last decades, there is a feeling that opera is losing the ability to rethink itself in line with the referred artistic and socio-cultural context of our contemporaneity. In the midst of the major opera houses in Europe we read statistics that point to the continuation of the demand for the Grand Opéra, with monumental interpretations within Opera Tradition. However, the proliferation of an alternative circuit around the opera is evident, with new repertoire being created or with bold approaches to an existing repertoire. Once again, the socio-cultural, artistic and also economic context is playing, of course, an important role in this gradual transformation.” (PEREIRA, SALGADO-ESMAE: 2021)⁴”

¹ PEREIRA & SALGADO:2021 “**A new singer’s profile (?)** Vocal approaches for new opera making within the HEIs. How do we see it?” WG2EOA_LAB - IO

² SALGADO:2021, “Vox Ludos: Singing and the Expression of Emotion. A research on the Performative Process of Making Opera Today” WG2EOA_LAB-IO

³ SALGADO, BINYION:2021, “Workshop feedback during ISP Maastricht, Vilnius and Porto” WG2EOA_LAB-IO

⁴ PEREIRA & SALGADO:2021 “**A new singer’s profile (?)** Vocal approaches for new opera making within the HEIs. How do we see it?” WG2EOA_LAB - IO

Within the proliferation of alternative circuits of contemporary making opera which purpose is to come closer to the audience by getting out of the black box into the urban or nature landscape, creating by this gesture the possibility of crossing information with the landscape's historical background, the public's own history and the opera performative content; and by doing this giving the public the oper(a)tunity of being participative, not just by listening or thinking while they 'comfortably' seated on a theater chair, but actually by being participative as a part of the opera itself.

ii) Alternative new spaces

“Social space is considered as a scenic space, with the ability to trigger ephemeral events and to give us clues about the way individuals project and organize their personal path and make sense of their lives, by reinventing them. Today's new artistic proposals give rise to a plethora of real and virtual spaces with the potential to become scenic spaces. In this sense, the social space has become a privileged place for artistic production and for theorization in the field of social sciences. As such, space can be understood as an open narrative structure that reflects individual opinions and dramaturgies that, in turn, will contextualize a specific social moment. Thereby, we can put forward the idea that social and interpersonal memories play a crucial role in the creation of the scenic space. This is based on the assumption that the public space is a space where acting and performance are in strict connection with the artistic and operatic discourse.” (SALGADO, ESMAE:2021)⁵ and (MARISA, ESMAE:2021)⁶

iii) Alternative new audiences

⁵ SALGADO:2021, “In-Between Time and Space” - WG2EOA_LAB - IO

⁶ MARISA:2021, “When space becomes art” - WG2EOA_LAB - IO

“Focusing on how an artistic experience can face an experience of a landscape, develop new cultural and nature experiences and create new stage room and meeting places. The terms of the interaction between the audience and the actors change radically when one stops to consider the landscape as background/scenography for a stage event or performance and instead using the landscape’s characteristics and historical layers involving the location with people, resources, history, heritage, and gives the audience /participants relationship and status as co-creators. Thus, enabling visitors and audience to transform into participants and co-creators, and what changing clearly the mean of performance for artists and participants.” (ERLINGSDOTTER-SADA:2021)⁷ and (SALGADO-ESMAE:2021)⁸

3. New and Open Profiles

“The socio-cultural, artistic and also economic context have been playing an important role in the gradual transformation of Opera, allowing and obliging many singers, opera composers and opera students, generally speaking, to choose, beyond the traditional circuit, an alternative circuit to the field of opera which demands the choice of new ways of relating to the practice of collaborative and co-creative work around the Opera and the Music Theatre. This need for a more flexible and open profile of a singer, and opera students, may create proactive and attentive professionals to the reality that surrounds them. In this sense, opera may turn into this new artistic and cultural performance practice process which allows it to become intrinsically significant in the communities’ history and also in the audiences’ development.” (SALGADO-ESMAE)⁹

⁷ SARA:2021, “Action, Participation, Meeting” - - WG2EOA_LAB - IO

⁸ SALGADO:2021, “In-Between Time and Space” - WG2EOA_LAB - IO

⁹ SALGADO:2021, “In-Between Time and Space” - WG2EOA_LAB – IO

4. New Opera Making – the outcoming of Virtual and Digital Spaces

We are living times of paradigm change where the virtuality of relationships has been detaching individuals from each other giving a false sense of social interaction and disabling us of having a real and deep interaction. We live within the giddiness of the operative time and the fakeness of a disembodied presence. These are true challenges for the performative arts, such as opera, where the co-presence of musicians/singers and audience is an essential feature. After two presential Intensive Study Programs (ISP) in Maastricht and Vilnius - which have been valuable experiences on collaborative pedagogical and creative work - we had to face the pandemic limitations of these events in presence and to plan an online ISP that could answer, somehow, to our project's vision.

In the discussion of its structure and content we started with the assumption that *“Opera isn't dying but it's changing. The world is changing, isn't it? Is Europe dying in 2021 or it's just undergoing in an inevitable transformation (as anything in life)? “Opera reflects every historical era's particular aesthetics needs and concerns” (Martín, 2002, p. 116) so why don't we accept that?”* (PEREIRA, SALGADO-ESMAE: 2021)¹⁰

One of the most interesting outcomes of this Online ISP was the amazing students' answer to the challenge of collaborative creation of micro-operas of 180s. This provocative assignment led to a deep and fruitful discussion both

¹⁰ PEREIRA & SALGADO:2021 *“A new singer's profile (?) Vocal approaches for new opera making within the HEIs. How do we see it?”* WG2EOA_LAB - IO

during the creative process and the reflection of the work achieved. To work around the impossibility of creating an experience due to the short duration of the works and, at the same time, to overcome the characteristic of an ephemeral meeting between audience and performers was a real and transforming challenge. The tension between opera as the mirror of the historical era and opera as an art form that needs the bound of a real experience has led to the creation of 8 micro-operas created around these problematizations. It has been a truly transformative learning process¹¹.

¹¹ Link to the micro-operas