

Statement of Objectives

Claudia Friedlander, Soprano

Applicant, DMus in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy

In pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree, it is my goal to achieve excellence as both an artist and a teacher. I intend to refine my craft as a singer and performer; I will also commence a program of pedagogical study that will qualify me to facilitate the development of a healthy and secure singing technique while simultaneously addressing the chronic muscular tensions and inhibiting patterns of coordination that plague many students of voice.

Singing is an endeavor that involves work on many different planes; it is an art that demands a physical, emotional and intellectual commitment of its practitioners. While this is also true for instrumental performers, the singer faces the additional challenges of dramatic and verbal expression and of transforming the body into an instrument capable of executing one's musical thoughts. The perfected singer is truly an athlete. Yet, while professional athletes generally begin intensive training at a very early age, singers often do not begin formal study until they are young adults. By then, habits of posture and coordination have developed, the speaking voice has been used on a daily basis, and one has become accustomed to suppressing spontaneous expression in order to fit in smoothly with one's environment. In addition to seeking

excellent technical training, singers must also learn how to recognize and address the tensions and blocks they have developed that can interfere with free vocal production. My doctoral studies will focus on incorporating a method of helping singers to let go of these unconscious habits and postures into a system of traditional vocal teaching.

My interest stems from the challenges I myself have faced as a singer. I had been a devoted clarinetist for 12 years before I began to study voice, and I unwittingly brought a tremendous amount of jaw, tongue, throat and arm tension to my singing, as well as a very different approach to breath support. It was clear that I had a formidable vocal instrument at my disposal, but learning to use it required a lot of concentrated physical “rewiring” on my part. I have had the privilege of studying with several distinguished teachers of voice; however, I believe that without the assistance of the bodywork specialists with whom I have also worked, I would not have been able to respond nearly as well to the excellent teaching I have received. I also believe that my experience with Bioenergetics, the Alexander Technique, and Neo-Reichean release work has contributed to my dramatic and interpretive abilities. It is difficult to fully invest an operatic role or a song with the intense emotional and physical qualities it needs while maintaining the necessary detachment and relaxation vital to healthy singing. Exploring the emotional language of the body has greatly enhanced my effectiveness as a performer, and I would like to share the techniques that I have found so valuable.

McGill's music department provides superior vocal, dramatic, and musical training, and the University undoubtedly offers excellence in other disciplines that will be essential to my research, such as anatomy and physical therapy. I believe that McGill would be able to provide unparalleled guidance, supervision, and resources for the kind of focused work I will do as a doctoral student, and I hope that you will give my application your favorable consideration.