Speech Pathology In Practice: Vocal Health and Vocal Myths in Todays Singers

This summer of 2016, I would like to put into use my two majors: Speech Language Pathology and Music (vocal performance).

I plan on shadowing a Speech Pathologist in Yorktown, Virginia, Ann Cyptar, who focuses mostly on patients with vocal health issues (singers, actors, etc.) and occasionally with patients suffering from head and neck cancer. To further my studies, I would also try to shadow a few other speech pathologists who work primarily with patients suffering from more common speech disorders and stroke patients.

In an effort to truly understand the usefulness and importance of Speech Pathology in practice as a singer, I will also be attending two vocal workshops/performance opportunities. The first would be the Classical Singers Workshop at Peabody University from July 6-10 in Baltimore, Maryland. The second would be participating in the Bethesda Summer Music Festival in Bethesda, Maryland from June 20 to July 3. I will either attend both festivals, or attend only the Classical Singers Workshop. I am particularly drawn to the Classical Singers Workshop because it serves both high school and college singers. I would like to investigate if there are distinct differences between the "vocal health" practices that younger versus older singers use.

Some of the challenges I anticipate are working with such a wide variety of singers and properly explaining my goals and studies to each person that I interview. I anticipate that it may also be an adjustment for some of Mrs. Cyptar's patients to see me studying alongside her, but I believe this will be important training on how I may work with patients in the future.

During both of these experiences, I will be documenting and interviewing the various singers I meet, all of whom have a vast range of years of experience with vocal performance, and drawing conclusions about the importance of vocal health and the techniques presented by Speech Pathologists. I will also be doing research, with Mrs. Cyptar, on certain "vocal health myths" and seeing if singers are aware of the validity of these possible myths. In my outcome report, I will be presenting my findings on these vocal health myths. I would be open to presenting this information as a sort of seminar, teaching other singers and anyone who speaks often about the proper care of the voice. My main arguments would be that whether you sing or not, vocal health must be observed in order to prevent overuse and my goal is to provide singers and public speakers a clear list of what works, and what doesn't.

Mrs. Pamela Beasley, who is also my voice teacher, will monitor my progress and we will have weekly email correspondence during the summer of 2016. I will also be meeting with her at least once over the summer in person to discuss my findings and receive her input, as a vocal performer and voice teacher.

My proposed timeline is as follows:

- Spring 2016: I will continue intense studies in Speech Pathology through the Curry School at UVA as well as delve further into my musical performance studies by applying for the performance concentration. I will continue to study with Mrs. Beasley and also begin questioning some singers on grounds as to what vocal health strategies they believe to be most effective. I will also be applying to the vocal workshop over the summer.
- Summer 2016: I will begin my studies with Mrs. Cyptar and continue correspondence with Mrs. Beasley. In July, I will attend the Classical Singers Workshop. This will presumably be preceded also by the Bethesda Music Festival that I plan to attend.
- Fall 2016: I will continue to consolidate my ideas and use my research findings in practice with my own lessons. I will use my personal findings as part of my evidence in my outcome report.
- April 2017: I will finalize my findings in a detailed outcome report that explains not only the Speech Pathology science behind the voice, but also how vocal performers interpret various vocal health strategies. I will present my outcomes either in a report or presentation, or both.

Budget:

To complete my research as detailed above, I am applying for a budget of $1,500. This grant would cover tuition for both vocal programs, as well as travel costs and some of the housing costs. The budget breakdown is as follows:

- Classical Singers Workshop Tuition- $500.00
- Bethesda Music Festival Application Fee- $50.00
- Bethesda Music Festival Tuition- $800.00-$1,000.00
    - Depends on role
- Car Travel Expenses- ~$40.00
    - To Maryland: 230 miles
    - To Ann Cyptar's office: 20 miles
        - *will be daily trips for approximately a month*
- Housing- $1, 642.46
    - Because neither the Classical Singers Workshop nor the Bethesda Music Festival provide housing for participants, I will be required to rent a hotel room or secure living in a college dormitory near the location of the workshops. These prices will not only vary by location, but also time of booking. As it is mid-summer, I expect rental prices to be very high. I have not yet found any universities near Baltimore that offer housing for students who are not attending the university. The price above is an example of the price of a hotel near Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, MD. The price is assuming that I check in on Sunday July, 3rd and checkout July 10th from the Hyatt Regency Inn. [I chose this website as it

is listed on Peabody Conservatories suggested Hotels located near the university].
- Personal Expenses- $500
    Total Budget: $3832.46

    The budget above contains projected costs, but I expect most of the costs to be similar to what I have detailed above. The $1,500 grant would be helpful in covering the high cost of living and also lessen the cost of the tuition for both programs. As I will be working part-time during the summer, I will use my personal funds to cover personal expenses. I also will have some funding from home that will aid in covering travel expenses. I plan to make this trip as economic as possible and this grant would help offset the most expensive cost, which is the housing component.