To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Elizabeth Lepock. I am in my fourth and final year of the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Voice at Western University in London, Ontario and am also a member of the Ontario Chapter of NATS. I am writing to express my desire to apply for the Van L. Lawrence Fellowship.

I have a deep personal interest in voice science and its application in vocal pedagogy. During my undergraduate studies several years following I suffered from unresolved technical issues in my singing which worsened to the point where I had nearly reached the decision to stop singing. Because of my natural bent towards academics, languages, and teaching, I was encouraged to pursue further university education aiming towards pedagogical study, and began my master’s degree. Early in the second year of that program, my professor recommended what no previous teacher had: to seek the advice of a speech language pathologist. I was diagnosed with and treated for primary muscle tension dysphonia, and retrained my singing technique under the tutelage of that same teacher. I now feel like a completely different singer; I am finally beginning to be able to express myself vocally the way I have always intuitively wanted.

This experience has inspired my DMA dissertation research. I think that because classical singers perform such demanding acts with their voices, they may only show symptoms in their singing voices rather than speaking voice, resulting in general practitioners, and SLPs and ENTs who do not specialize in the singing voice, dismissing the severity of their symptoms. From my literature review, I also surmise that most voice pedagogues are not familiar with the symptoms of muscle tension dysphonia, and could easily confuse them with singing technique issues. Therefore, I am currently running a narrative inquiry study into the experience of classical singers who have been diagnosed with primary muscle tension dysphonia. I am interviewing a small sample (10-12) of classical singers primarily to search for similarities between their experiences in order to make recommendations for future research. An additional goal of my research is to provide an opportunity for participants’ stories to be heard. I felt isolated and really suffered in my experience of vocal dysfunction. I want to shed some light on that element of the experience.

I had the wonderful experience of presenting a poster of a preliminary stage of my research at the NATS conference in Las Vegas in June 2018. So many colleagues expressed their interest in and support of my research, and encouraged me to connect with researchers in the United States, but as a student with limited budget for travel, I have not been able to do much of this. In fact, I was only able to attend the 2018 NATS conference because of a travel stipend from my university, and have never been able to attend the Care of the Professional Voice Symposium. One recommendation for future
study that I hope to make when I publish my dissertation is to interview singing voice specialist SLPs and ENTs. In addition to helping confirm the direction of my current research, attending the symposium and undertaking other travel to network with these types of professionals could help facilitate this future research.

I am thrilled to say that in addition to inspiring my DMA dissertation research, my experience with primary muscle tension dysphonia has guided me to learn far more about vocal physiology, acoustic, health, and pedagogy than I might have otherwise pursued as a voice teacher. I use this knowledge on a daily basis in my voice studio – even with young students – and I find that they seem to like knowing something of why I am asking them to try various things, or “how things work.” I show them the muscles I am talking about on a anatomical model of the larynx, I explain resonance concepts by comparing them to how different colours of light can be refracted, etc. However, my most rewarding application of this knowledge is in working on retraining the voice of another young professional singer who was diagnosed with primary muscle tension dysphonia. Her joy in discoveries of new freedom, resonance, registration, and stamina/vocal health is so gratifying, and I now feel that continually learning is ethically necessary in order to be a voice pedagogue. I feel that this research into primary muscle tension dysphonia in classical singing, and its impact on my teaching, may be my life’s work.

Thank you so much for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Lepock
Elizabeth Rogalsky Lepock, M. Mus., Soprano
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Mobile: 519-496-7542; elizabeth.lepock@gmail.com

Education
Candidate for Doctor of Musical Arts Degree
• University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada
August 2019

Masters of Music Performance and Literature
• University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada
June 2015

Honours Bachelor of Music (with Distinction) – Voice Performance and Music History
• Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
June 2009

Awards
• Poster Presentation: “Primary Muscle Tension Dysphonia in Classical Singers” NATS Las Vegas 2018
• Graduate Student Teaching Award, June 2018
• Ontario Graduate Scholarship, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018
• Open Voice Category Winner, Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Orchestra Concerto Competition 2016
• Full tuition scholarship, University of Western Ontario, 2013-present
• Adult-Category-Winner of Kitchener-Waterloo Gilbert and Sullivan Society Competition, Nov. 2013
• Art Vogt Memorial Voice Scholarship, April 2011

Teaching Experience
Voice/Piano Instructor
Private Studio, Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario
September 2002-present
• Have taught over 300 students of varying ages/levels at local music schools; peak studio size - 65 clients
• Current private and Pro Music studios totalling approximately 25 students of varying ages.
• Prepared students for RCM examinations with voice and piano students up to Grade 8 level

Graduate Teaching Asst. French Lyric Diction/M.Mus. Performance Research I/II
Don Wright Faculty of Music, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario
Sept. 2017-present
• Graded assignments and exams; assisted students in reinforcing diction and research concepts.

Graduate Teaching Asst. COAA and AEDO
Don Wright Faculty of Music, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario
September 2016-April 2017
• One of two administrators running Canadian Operatic Arts Academy and Accademia Europea dell'Opera

Graduate Teaching Asst. Opera Workshop
Don Wright Faculty of Music, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario
September 2015-April 2016
• Adminstrated and stage-managed/ran production of Humperdink's *Hansel and Gretel* and opera gala.

Graduate Teaching Asst. M. Mus. Performance Research III
Don Wright Faculty of Music, University of Western Ontario
September 2015-December 2015
• Graded theory assignments from Schenkerian Analysis to Post-Tonal Theory, exams and essays.

Graduate Teaching Asst. Second-Year Music History
Don Wright Faculty of Music, University of Western Ontario
September 2013-April 2015
• Lectured/led discussion of readings/listening examples in tutorials; met and corresponded with students to advise them on the research/writing of essays/assignments; graded assignments and exams, invigilated exams.

Voice/Choir and Musical Director
Ontario Mennonite Music Camp, Conrad Grebel UC, Waterloo, Ontario
August 2009 and August 2011

Camp Co-Director
Ontario Mennonite Music Camp, Conrad Grebel UC, Waterloo, Ontario
August 2012-August 2015
• Chose and directed choral music and musical and conducted both choir and musical
• Designed and implemented program for voice class of students at a variety of levels and goals
• Planned/adminstrated guest performers and workshops and all other camp activities
Performance Experience – selected operatic roles

- Western Opera Workshop, London, ON
- Simone Luti, conductor; Tom Diamond, stage director

- Accademia Europea Dell'Opera, Lucca, Italy
- Jonathan Peter Kenny, conductor; James Conway, director

- Opera2Go, Timothy Richard, artistic director, London, ON

First Spirit – *Die Zauberflöte*, W. A. Mozart October 2011
- Opera Kitchener – Kitchener, Ontario
- Daniel Warren, conductor

Pied Person – *My Audia: Return of the Pied People*, Peter Hatch

- Inter Arts Matrix/Les Escales Improbables de Montréal September 2010
- Inter Arts Matrix/Stratford Summer Music Festival August 2010
- Anne-Marie Donovan, Director

The Aunt – *Madama Butterfly*, Giacomo Puccini March 2010
- Opera Laurier – Waterloo, Ontario
- Sabatino Vacca, conductor

Sister Constance de Saint Denis – *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Francis Poulenc February 2009
- Opera Laurier – Waterloo, Ontario
- Paul Pulford, conductor; Graham Cozzubbo, director; Sabatino Vacca, asst. musical director

Performance Experience – selected recitals

DMA Performance Event 3 – Western University, von Kuster Hall, London, Ontario May 2017
- Oratorio arias and ensembles with Simone Luti, piano, and colleagues

Conrad Grebel University College Noon Recital Series, Waterloo, Ontario October 2016
- with Erica de la Cruz, piano, Linnea Thacker, violin, and Ben Bolt-Martin, cello

DMA Performance Event 1 – Western University, von Kuster Hall, London, Ontario April 2016
- Recital on theme of mental health with Simone Luti, piano

Conrad Grebel University College Noon Recital Series, Waterloo, Ontario February 2012
- with Jason White, piano

Cambridge Galleries, Cambridge, Ontario November 2011
- with Jason White, piano

Performance Experience – selected oratorio

Soprano soloist – *Messiah*, G. F. Handel December 2018
- Menno Singers, St. Jacob’s, ON
- Brandon Leis, artistic director

Conducting Experience

- Kodaly Level 1 Certification July 2016
- Ontario Mennonite Music Camp – choir, voice small ensembles, musicals 2009-2015

Languages

English – fluent and sung, French – semi-fluent and sung, German – working knowledge and sung, Italian – working knowledge and sung, Spanish – sung, Russian – sung

NATS Member 2016-2018