

III.2.4 General view of the budget

*Note that the state subvention for the ballet school is part of the income of the ONP.

Fig. 7a and b: Income ONP 2004 and 2005

Figure 7a and b offer the possibility to compare the income for 2004 and 2005. These are subdivided here in to state funding, ticketing income and types of income including tours, sponsorship/patronage, guided tours and audiovisual activities. The most important shifts within this part of the income are located within sponsorship/patronage and tours. The new management has increased ticket prices, but this did not influence the attendance of performances and thus led to an important augmentation of the theatre's income.

Fig. 8a and b: expenditures ONP 2004 and 2005

Compared to 2004, the division of the expenditures stayed largely the same in 2005 (see figure 8a and b), though there is an important increase in costs linked with the artistic production. This was and is an explicit choice of the new management.

In this overall budget, the expenses for the 'Jeunes Public' – programme are for 2004 €357,000, being 1.09% of the 'artistic production costs', and in 2005 €320,000 or 0.85% of the 'artistic production costs. Thus the programme runs on modest resources compared to the overall budget of the House. One has to note though, that the project 'Dix Mois d'école et d'Opéra' is not part of the Opéra's budget, but funded by the Ministry of National Education.

III.2.5 Education within the company

It was the Opéra de Paris that started in 1982-83 with the first service jeune public (young audience department), although l'Opéra de Lyon already programmed performances for youngsters from 1976 onwards (*Le Loup des neiges* by Malcolm Williamson). Avignon followed the Opéra National in 1984. Both houses pioneer in quite different styles. The Opéra National de Paris orientated its work towards workshops, guided tours and performances dedicated to a young audience. Avignon started with free school matinees and access to the dress rehearsals. A second wave of actions towards a young audience followed in the 90s. Nantes (1990), Strasbourg (1992), Lyon (1993), Toulouse and Rennes (1995) followed by Bordeaux (1996) created posts exclusively linked with a young audience (Kayas 2002:51). Today all lyrical theatres have programmes for a young audience.

III.2.5.1 History of the educational activities at the Opéra National de Paris

The service animation et jeune public (the department for workshops and young audiences programme) started with a production for and with children, workshops for body and voice and exhibitions for children since the Opéra provides opera and dance. The department was first based at Palais-Garnier and moved in 1990 to the Opéra-Bastille. With the move to the new theatre the programming of performances for a young audience was added to the activities of the department.

The department consists of a head of department, an assistant and student apprenticeships. For the workshops the department relies on freelancers.

In 1991 the project ‘Dix mois d'Ecole et d'Opéra’ developed next to the service animation et jeune public. The programme started with a long-term project involving classes from schools based in the banlieues (the backyards) of Paris. More precisely the ZEP (ZEP Zones d’Education Prioritaire) (the prioritized zones). The programme gave the pupils of these schools from a socially deprived zone the chance to discover over a period of 10 months the life and the different professions based at the opera. The project is supported and subsidized by the Ministère de l’Education Nationale (the Ministry of National Education).

Educational activities started to develop next to one another, therefore in 1994 the Service Culturel was founded to group all existing activities addressed to a ‘new’ audience, and initiating new activities in the field of pedagogy and heritage for the wider audience; eg. projects with university ‘Université et Opéra’ since 1995, a series of free activities around productions in the main auditorium.

*Photo 6: Cuore Opera © Arthur Pequin
April 2005*

The Opéra National de Paris was one of the first opera houses along with the Royal Opera House London and the Théâtre de la Monnaie to meet on a European basis. In 1998 it was one of the founding members of RESEO. Recently, with the new management, the Service Culturel functions without a resource person, thus the different departments of the cultural service exist next to one another again.

III.2.5.2 *Educational mission*

Most of the documents and texts on the ONP bring forth what was published in the annual report of 2003-2004: *The Opéra National de Paris wants to accompany the young and the adult audience in their discovery of new performances and thus support the development of their taste in opera and dance.*

The philosophy of Jean Vilar's 'Ecole du spectacle' can be found throughout the policy papers of the house. The opera is an active intermediary between citizens and culture, between audience and artists. There is no performance, if there is no match between the two of them (Fleury 2002: 37-38; Fleury 2003:124-127; Gall 2001:11).

An internal working paper stated the following as a mission for the cultural and artistic education aspect of the Opéra National de Paris:

Opera, more than other cultural expression, involves different artistic disciplines. It is evident for a house as the Opéra National de Paris to be active as a training institute for dancers, singers, musicians and other artists, and on the other hand to work on the education of the audience. Moreover the still decreasing attention for arts, and more specifically the art disciplines within opera, in the media give to this educational role an importance which exceeds the will to develop the taste of the public and continuously attempts to recall the fundamental place of theatre in our society. In other words to make sure young and old can learn about this part of our cultural heritage.

III.2.5.3 Structure: Place of education in the company

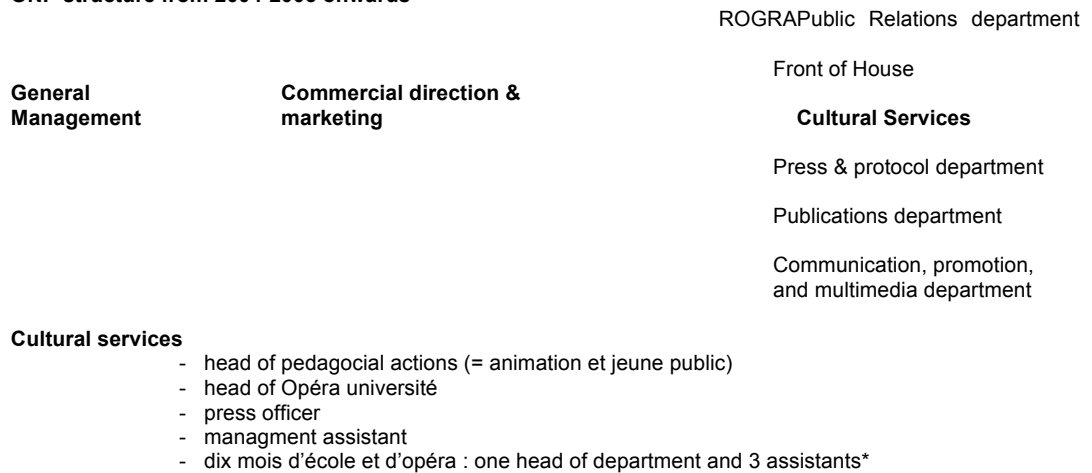
Within the season 2003-2004 all units designated to the audience-linked educational activities were grouped under the service culturel (see fig. 9a). The head of each unit within the cultural service had to report to the director of that department, and had little contact with the general and artistic management.

ONP Season 2003-2004

* Personnel part of Ministère de L'éducation nationale

Fig. 9a: place of education within ONP 2003-2004 (brochure 2003-2004)

The project Dix mois d'école et d'Opéra has a specific position within this setting. It is part of the opera house but the personnel in charge of the project are not part of the opera house staff and the funding goes through the Ministry of Education. With the new management, a new organisational structure was put into place (see fig. 9b), the activities of the cultural service still exist (see fig. 9b at the bottom left), but the department itself has been abolished. The activities now depend on the department's communication and marketing except for the artistic aspects, which the heads of unit independent from one another report directly to Gerard Mortier and his artistic director.

ONP structure from 2004-2005 onwards

* Personnel part of the 'Ministère de L'éducation nationale'

Fig. 9b: Structure of the educational programme at ONP 2004-2005 onwards (brochure 2005-2006)

III.2.5.4 Educational Programme

The Opéra National de Paris develops activities for the audience based on short meetings with artists, in-depth visits of both the Théâtre Garnier and the Opéra Bastille, performances, and long-term educational projects to facilitate the accessibility to a lively artform (Metternich 2005:32).

Photo 7: Mister Cauchemar © CREA February 2005

Under the heading 'Service Culturel' (cultural services) three sub-departments/units reach different audience groups: the department 'Animation et programmation jeune public' (young audiences programme and workshops), the team behind 'Dix mois

d'école et d'opéra' (Ten months school and opera) and the unit 'Opéra Université' (Opera and Universities).

The department '**Animation et programmation jeune public**' (young audience programme and workshops) addresses its activities to young people, schools, teachers and families. Every season the amphitheatre and the studio present about 60 performances for a young and an adult audience giving them the chance to explore different types of music and dance (baroque, hip-hop, jazz, musical comedy, small opera productions often sung by young people, and so on), the department also provides workshops for teachers and schools. Classes can attend rehearsals or go for a guided tour and/or meet up with the artists. This diversified high quality programme is often the first contact the attendees have with opera or dance, and its principal goal is to train the attendees taste for the arts. '*L' enfant a absolument le droit de ne pas aimer, mais il n'a pas le droit de ne pas savoir!*' (the child has without any doubt the right not to like it, but he has not the right not to know it!) states Agnès de Jaquelot, head of the department, in an interview with a journalist of *Le Monde* in November 2004. '*Opera and dance are not part of young peoples lives and are a priori judged as being not accessible for them, although the dancer and the singer expresses themselves through their body and want to move the spectators*', de Jaquelot continues. '*Thus it is very important to welcome the first comers in a positive way and in the best conditions. Everything has to be right to make it work: the artistic quality of the performance, the timing, the diversity of the programme, the age setting, the price, the preparative work before the performance*' (2001:143-143; Monti & Jouvès 2002:182).

In 2004-2005 the project reached about 21,000 people. Table 9 shows the number of participants that attended the *Jeune Public*-programme. The first part of the table gives an overview of the performances in the Amphithéâtre and the Studio; the second part of the table tells more about the workshops around the *Jeune Public*-programme and marks the number of tickets at reduced price for a performance in the main auditorium.

Table 9: Frequentation project ' young audience workshops and programme'
at ONP 2003-2005

Programme Animation et programmation Jeune Public. Number of audiences		
	2003-2004	2004-2005
opéras	7,405	7,824
ballets	7,685	8,925
récitals (matinées scolaires)	1,451	1,517
musique de chambres (matinées scolaires)	1,066	1,042
total programmation JP	17,607	19,308
places grandes salles prix réduit	583	585
animations à la carte *	1,105	1,491
animations dans les classes	321	352
total général	19,616	21,736
*Note that for saison 2003-2004 the à la carte workshops involved 28 activities in primary and secondary school as well as 4 trainings for trainers; for season 2004-2005 this was 39 activities in primary and secondary school as well as 6 trainings for trainers.		

The project **Dix mois d'école et d'Opéra** developed in partnership with the Academies de Créteil, Paris and Versailles. It involves one class for two years in a training process. Dix mois d'école et d'Opéra concentrates in the first place on young people between 14 and 20 years of age coming from a deprived education zone (ZEP). For the season 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, 30 classes and about 800 students (age 4 to 20) took part in the project which involves visits, meetings with artists, meetings with the different departments of the opera house, the attendance of rehearsals and performances and each year follow three classes follow three hours per week of artistic training (dance, singing and theatre training) in the Opéra-Bastille and in cultural structures next to their schools. A journal is edited and at the end of the season they give a performance at the amphitheatre of Opéra-Bastille. More and more parents are involved in the process and training for teachers are put into place (Metternich 2005:33).

As Danièle Fouache, head of the team, explains it: *'Dix mois d'école et d'Opéra is an adventure that started as a result of meetings and exchanges between different partners from the cultural and the educational field with one common wish; to reduce the inequality of chances and to restore the social link by giving each youngster – in deprived neighbourhoods – the chance to learn more about the*

artistic and cultural heritage. Cultural institutions, free spaces and places full of emotions and dreams, are a beautiful instrument for personal valorisation and for curiosity, listening and questioning about that which is new to the youngsters' (2001:119).

And last but not least the unit **Opéra Université** gives each season about ten universities and/or high schools the chance to discover the Opéra through an intensive week of opera or dance. The week is designed in collaboration with the professors in order to meet the needs of that particular group of students. The discovery weeks may introduce a global view of the house or may focus on one specific aspect of the work in the Opéra National de Paris (Metternich 2005:33).

Apart from the projects ran by these three departments/units, the commercial and communications department of the ONP provides a range of free activities, introduces the audience to a performance, and gives it the chance to meet artists: e.g. *Casse-croute* which is based on regular meetings. Each Thursday at lunchtime meetings with artists, concerts by musicians of the Opéra and films are organised around performances programmed in the main auditoria. There is also *Plein feux*, an introduction which takes place a couple of days before the opening night of certain performance and which looks at the work presented from different angles.

All activities grouped under the heading 'Cultural Service' thus complement each other, although, as can be learned from the narrative below, this complementarity is not always perceived as such by the management of the House.

III.2.6 Education narrative

Since she has been working from the start within the activities of the service culturel and since the Opéra National de Paris is represented in RESEO through the projects 'Animation et Jeune Public', I decided to look at the views of the head of the department. The interview took place at the Opéra National de Paris on the 24th of November 2005. The interviewee will be referred to as "B".

Personal context

“B” grew up in a family where culture played an important role in daily life activities. Her father had a military career, and worked afterwards as general secretary for a financial institution. Her mother never worked, she stayed home to raise their 5 children. Her grandfather (her mother’s father) was a painter, and so it happened that they often visited exhibitions. But not just exhibitions, the family also went to museums, attended theatre performances and concerts and above all listened a lot to music. Her father had played the cello when he was young and her mother still played the piano when “B” was little.

There was always music around. Her father had the first long play discs. “B”’s parents loved contemporary music. Olivier Messiaen, Claude Debussy and all 20th century composers were played. Apart from the French contemporary music, they also liked baroque music, but nothing in between. Nineteenth century music and opera were not in the playlist. So as a child Messiaen was more familiar to “B” than other composers.

First contacts with opera

“B” was not familiar with 19th century music and during the course of the interview it became clear that she was and still is not really fond of the music written during that century. Another part of the music repertoire she did not feel acquainted with opera. She really did not like it. “B” cannot explain why but she believes it is probably because *a voice singing did not move her emotionally*. Although she had sung in a chorus, singing in opera did not interest her at all.

“B” seemed to have been very firm in other choices too, because apart from singing in a chorus “B” also followed gymnastic dancing lessons as a child, but once these became ballet lessons and time investment rose to three times a week, she stopped dancing. This was at first because of the effects on her schoolwork and secondly

because her mother did not let her continue. *In the end* “B” said during the interview *this seemed to have been a good choice, because as she says herself she would not have been a good dancer anyway so why then invest time in learning it.* Presumably she was a perfectionist. “B” played the piano although she did not follow any musical training before the age of 17. At that stage she decided to go to University to study economics and parallel to that, to study music. She took piano and flute lessons. After her economics studies she worked as a researcher in the section where she finished her final year. She did not continue to work in music until later. Although culture was omnipresent at “B”’s home, working in the arts was not evident and according to “B”: *‘On avait beau baigner dans une ambiance culturelle et musicale, mais on ne pouvait pas travailler dans la musique. Ce n’était pas quelque chose qu’on faisait* (we had the opportunity to grow up in a cultural and musical atmosphere, but we were not supposed to work in the musical sector. That was not done in those days)’. Therefore neither “B” nor her sister started to work in music, “B” was an economist and her sister was in orthopaedics, but finally they did both find careers in music pedagogy.

It was through her musical studies at University that “B” had the chance to see a classical ballet at the Théâtre Garnier, but this first visit was not really a success. “B” found it rather dreadful. Her first contact with opera was a little better, but not passionate. She attended the creation of a new work. Step by step she started to learn what opera was about as a part of the general musical language.

‘Within my musical studies I immediately turned to the pedagogical trainings’ says “B” *‘I followed all trainings involving active learning: Martenau, Orff, Kodaly’.* Thus the ‘active pedagogy’ was crucial throughout her musical education. She even went to Hungary to learn the Kodaly-methodology. Before starting to work at the opera, “B” was a teacher in musical theory at different municipal schools and associations in the Parisian region. Often these associations were looking for a more vivid pedagogy, with more interactivity and creativity on behalf of the students involved, than the academic and less dynamic style used in the other schools.

To “B” musical theory involved far more than the explanation of the musical codes. When she started to work at a national school in the suburbs of Paris, she combined sessions of musical theory with electro-acoustic workshops. So it happened that during dancing class, in collaboration with the dancing teacher, she taught dancers to compose their own music to accompany them with their dancing improvisation.

‘Et donc quand il s’agissait de mettre sur pied des activités éducatives à l’Opéra moi j’étais partante pour le côté: travailler avec les enfants sur une matière musicale’.

(So when education activities had to be put into place at the Opera, I choose the part: working with children on the musical language). Thus when she was asked to start an education projects at the Opera she accepted to work on the part involving ‘work with children on a musical language’, because it engages the children in a creative process through which they – according to “B” – are more involved in the music and have a better understanding of the musical language than if one would just introduce the music to them.

Working in education at the Opéra National de Paris

When, 23 years ago, “B” started to work at ONP there were no activities at all for youngsters, however in keeping up with changes in national education and cultural policy the opera house was looking for ways of working with them (Beaulieu and Dardy 2002:18-22; protocol 1983). “B”’s colleague at the University who was in contact with the general secretary of the ONP proposed a project which seemed to answer the house’s need. The project had been accepted by the management and so “B”’s colleague started the project and asked “B” to assist him. He changed jobs within the opera house after a while and thus “B” became head of the activities for youngsters.

What interested her was inventing something musically with children. So her work at the opera house was very practical and resembled her former work as a teacher. The first year started rather informally with one school, one composer and one librettist who helped the students create and stage their own opera.

When looking to those days according to “B” *‘one always had to adapt one’s ideas to the opportunities of the moment. One always had to find the right balance between the activities one wanted to develop and the activities one felt one needed to do. If one always tried to reach that which was/seemed impossible one could be sure to break one’s neck’.*

Indeed certain things that happened in the early years she would never repeat again, but “B” did them back then because it created possibilities to work in at the time. Théâtre Garnier had only one auditorium with 2000 seats. According to “B” this was too big for a young audience programme, so instead other activities were developed such as opera and dance related workshops. One of the successes was a series of training sessions based on the technical use (not operatic use) of the voice. Théâtre Garnier was also often the scene for theme-linked exhibitions. To each exhibition “B” and her colleagues added a children’s part. The workshops were pretty much in line with “B”’s initial choice to work for the Opera House (musical creative work with children) the exhibition part was less linked with that.

Once Bastille opened, two small auditoriums became available, one with 200 places one with 500 places, which offered the opportunity to present musical performances in a more intimate setting and in better listening conditions. Thus “B” gradually started to develop a programme for a young audience. First the musical part, since this was most familiar to her, then after some study and training also the dance part of the programme. Again the perfectionism of “B” shows. She did not want to programme what she did not know well enough. It is illustrated as follows during the interview: *‘J’allais voir beaucoup de danses contemporaines (je n’aime pas tellement la danse classique), donc je me suis formé comme cela en danse. J’ai même une période repris des cours de danse contemporains pour pouvoir programmer.* (I went to see a lot of contemporary dance (I did not really like classical dance), so I trained myself in dance. I even took again some lessons in contemporary dance in order to be able to programme). Note, that as with opera and music, “B” was more in favour of contemporary dance. “B”’s parents’ taste for

music seems to have been influential for their daughter's taste for music throughout her career.

Regarding "B"'s belief in music education, for her, education is about initiating children into a genre they do not know. The ideal way of working here is through a creative activity such as they did in the early days. "B" has a clear preference for creative learning methodologies in music education derived from when she studied music at University. So it was not necessarily through offering them the possibility to attend a performance but through creative workshops including three aspects of opera: music, gesture and the use of the voice that the department tried to make children sensitive to opera. She developed this thought a little further by saying: '*sensibiliser les enfants à quelque chose en les faisant sentir eux-mêmes les composants de l'opéra. Donc les points forts étaient pédagogie, création et contemporain*' (Make children sensitive to components of opera by letting them 'feel' what the artform is about is very important to "B". Crucial here is the pedagogy, the creative aspect and last but not least the contemporary component). It is this that drives "B" in her job and made her accept the job in 1983. To stress this she concludes by saying that if in 1983 one had asked her to come and work for the Opéra National de Paris to programme and organise matinees for children and families, she would not have accepted the job. Though the latter is what most of her work is about today, "B" still tries to balance this work with the planning of creative workshops and introductory programmes and thus keeps pace with her original belief on what music/opera education should be according to her.

One can say "B" has a strong view on her work. When probing this a little further during the interview, three other axioms, or 'chevaux de bataille' (hobby horses), as "B" called them, occurred:

Firstly: *‘all performances for a young audience have to be of the utmost quality, in order not to miss the first positive contact with a performance. Because if it goes wrong, it breaks all possibilities for these youngsters to go further down that road in the future since they may not be interested anymore’*. A belief about quality she shares with Jean Vilar, he wanted to present, and even requested from his artists, that they – at any moment – would guarantee the highest level of quality (Vilar 1981: 275, 278).

Secondly: *‘children are not acquainted with performing arts. They cannot guess the keys to understand a performance if no one gives them to them. Quite a few people believe that once you have put a child in front of a show everything is fine, that they will understand. But this is not so, adults know what performing arts are about. They know how audience and artists relate to one another and they know what is going on content wise. There are codes, but the codes are secondary, it is basically about the content. Children do not have this background. There is no reference in their daily life to what happens on stage. So if one does not explain they do not understand why to be silent during a show’*.

“B”’s view here connects with what in France is called *L’éducation du Spectateur*, the education of the audience by explaining what the performance is about and what attending a performance means (Ubersfeld 1996). The audience becomes an active part of the performance (Fleury 2002:38; Fleury 2003: 125). “B” develops this by saying

that a performance is all about a meeting between artists and audience. If both are positive, a meeting between audience and artist will take place however, if one of them or both are in a negative mood the meeting will not happen. So both audience and artist play an active part in a good performance. The spectator sends positive energy to the artist and the artist tries to connect with the spectator (le spectacle vivant c’est une rencontre entre des artistes et des spectateurs et que si les artistes sont bons et les spectateurs sont bons la rencontre se ferrât, mais si les spectateurs sont

mauvais la rencontre ne se ferrât pas. Et si l'artistes sont mauvais la rencontre ne se ferra pas. Donc tout le monde à partie prenante. Que le spectateur est actif. Il a une énergie à renvoyer à l'artiste).

This is a position that “B” strongly defends because according to her few people seem to take this into account. She and her collaborators continuously have to remind teachers of the fact that preparing for a performance involves more than just explaining the content of what their pupils are going to see.

And thirdly “B” concludes her crucial set of axes with the view that *‘the spectator needs to be respected. One needs to welcome him/her always in the best possible conditions. Thus when proposing a show for children one needs to make sure the work performed is for their age range and that the circumstances in which the performance takes place comforts them’*. This is why, for “B” shows for children in an auditorium with 2000 seats do not make sense. The child or the youngster has the right not to like what s/he has seen, but s/he has to be able to explain why s/he did not like the performance presented. “B” recognises that the child differs from the adult, but those who say one needs to programme especially for children, have not completely understood what “B” wanted to express. She is more concerned about the artistic quality of the work performed, than whether this is a work especially written for children or youngsters, since there is more to discover than *Peter and the Wolf*.

So instead of calling her programme the *Programmation Jeune Public* (Young audiences programme) she likes to speak of *Programmation d'initiation* a programme accessible to young people; *an initiation programme* introducing dance, music and opera to all ages. When programming she tries to find something for everyone, even when a work is not part of her artistic preferences but when she knows it may interest a broad audience she programmes it, and it seems to work. Adults have informed her that they attended the programme because they are sure of the artistic quality and because of the variety of the works performed. Some also told her that they see it as a nice family outing, since most of it interests every member of the family.

Changing ideas

There is one moment “B” refers to as an important moment that changed her way of thinking on opera education, namely the first meeting with European colleagues in London in Spring 1995. It was a meeting as a small committee in the Royal Box at the Royal Opera House. Present were the heads of education of La Monnaie, the Royal Opera House and the Opéra National de Paris. This meeting opened new horizons to her, because now she met people defending their work at their Opera Houses. Before this, she had the impression that she was working on her own, defending something peculiar, since in 1995 there were very few Houses in France involved in educational work. The Opéra du Rhin and the Opéra de Lyon programmed operas for and sung by children was all that was provided.

“B” continues by saying *‘that when one passes one’s time defending ones work, one believes that one is right but one is not sure. Now, by meeting other people active in the same field also defending the same things and having the same problems, the perspective changes’*. This reassured her, and helped her not to hesitate to defend her beliefs. It even gave her the strength to go even faster.

“B” illustrates this by the fact that she was working on her own at the time, challenged by the continuous fear for budget costs, and aiming for an assistant. So since these colleagues seemed to have been able to install a real department and were able to free a reasonable budget to work with, she used these arguments to convince her management not to cut her budget and offer space for an assistant. It also gave her evidence to convince management that educational work could have another place in the House.

But above all the meeting enabled her to reflect on the work she was doing. “B” expressed the need to be able to question things. To see whether her way of working was good, and if not, how it could be improved. This is difficult to do on your own, certainly when the daily work is so demanding that gives little free space for

reflection. Thus having time to discuss challenges, doubts and projects with other colleagues was very welcoming and very enriching to “B”.

This is for “B” the strongest asset of the European Network of Education Departments in Opera Houses, RESEO funded in 1998. In fact the small meeting in London was the first step to this wider network, a network that at the moment counts more than 50 members throughout Europe. *‘Beaucoup de gens en RESEO veulent récupérer du concret et des modes d’action. Moi ce n’est pas forcément cela que je cherche en RESEO. Moi c’est plutôt la réflexion qui me fait avancer ma réflexion et qui m’aide à argumenter ce que moi je veux faire ici. Parce qu’au niveau de la philosophie derrière c’est bien clair’* (A lot of RESEO members want to retrieve concrete actions from a network meeting’ says “B” ‘but that is not necessarily what I look for in RESEO. To me it is far more the reflection that makes my reflection move forward and that helps me to underpin what I want to do here (at ONP), because the philosophy behind it is very clear’). Which implies that according to “B” the RESEO meetings help her thinking move forward, though as mentioned at the end of this narrative this is not necessarily so (see p.128).

Challenges and changes

When asked which challenges confronted her in her work, “B” responded *‘that even before the opening of La Bastille there was one influence which brought a change of focus in our work’*. One of the new directors, on arrival at the ONP made it clear to “B” that what the department did was fantastic, but that they were not entitled to take over the role of the music teachers, the physical trainers and the dance teachers. So the ONP was happy to organise activities for youngsters, but management was not going to pay for activities at school. The department was entitled to train the teachers, so that they could train their pupils, but the collaborators were not supposed to work in schools anymore. This blocked the most active part of the activities and reoriented the work of the department. The last years at Théâtre Garnier before moving to Opéra Bastille in 1990 were thus much more centred on the building itself. The department organised guided tours and continued creating

spaces for children in the exhibitions. It even organised an exhibition on musical toys. Such activities came closer to what the directors wanted to see at the Opera House, but were much less in line with what “B” wanted. Every other year they were still able to stage an opera for and by children. This happened in close collaboration with Jeunesses Musciales (Youth Music) de France and the performances took place at the Opéra Comique. The theatre was part of the ONP until 1990 and had a smaller auditorium. Collaborations grew organically. A key moment of transformation occurred when rehearsal space for the children’s opera was needed, which led to a collaboration with the *’atelier des enfants du centre Pompidou de Beaubourg (the workshop for children at the Pompidou center at Beaubourg)’* resulting in a series of workshops where the ONP education department provided the musical part and the collaborators of the centre the fine arts aspect. These workshops were then proposed to schools, until the moment the department of the opera was asked by the management to withdraw from them for the reason mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph.

The move from *Théâtre Garnier* to the brand new building *Opéra Bastille* in 1990 was another big change for the department. It was a change that altered “B”’s way of working completely. “B” continued to organise exhibitions and activities linked towards the programme of the main auditorium, enabling the audience to gain a better understanding of the works programmed. But gradually the focus of her work shifted, because parallel to this work, the person in charge of the programme for the Amphithéâtre and the Studio asked “B” to take care of the programme for children and young adults. As mentioned earlier the programme developed gradually and was first open to schools, later to a general audience. Today the programme is at its full potential according to the available budget, presenting about 66 performances a year and reaching about 20,000 people, and is central to “B”’s work at the Opera House, although she would have loved to continue working on creative activities with youngsters as she mentioned earlier in the interview. Her way of working changed with the shift to the new auditorium, but her philosophy about opera/dance education did not change: give young people the opportunity to feel/experience what music/opera/dance is about, thus creative workshops and meetings with the artists

are still part of the package for schools attending a performance in the Amphithéâtre or the Studio.

The situation of the department within the Opera House

B” received her assistant, but when looking at the budget dedicated to the audience orientated educational activities at ONP one can see in figure 7a and 7b that they have to work within a tight budget compared to for instance, Opera Domani in Italy (see comment to figures 10a and b), where As. Li. Co. invests 7% of its overall budget in this education project.

When asked about the current situation of the department in the Opera House, “B” answers that she *‘has the impression that she defends ways of working that are different from what happens in the House. The ONP functions more and more as a profitable enterprise, instead of an artistic enterprise whereas she continues to work as public service pedagogically and artistically’*. The line is less strict and subtler than is expressed above, but it is a daily challenge to “B” to find a balance between her work and the wishes of the management. Another difference can be highlighted in the way of working with schools. This is a long-term process and as such she believes cannot sell school tickets the same way one does with the rest of the audience, because according to “B” the performances for schools need to take place in the optimal circumstances. This implies not only that what happens on stage has to be of the best quality, but also that one takes care of the seating of the children in the auditorium and that one makes sure these children were one way or another introduced to the performance they are about to see.

According to “B”, *‘the hardest battle nowadays is situated at the level of presenting one’s work’*. She does not have a problem defending the young audience programme, but keeping the workshops and other initiating activities going is a challenge. All qualitative work done with schools seems to be difficult to digest. “B” supposes that *‘since there is the project 10 mois d’école et d’opéra the management believes that no extra work with schools is needed’*. But what they do not see is that

her workshop programme functions with a different pedagogy. While the *10 mois d'école et d'opéra* is set up to work with schools from deprived areas and for a maximum of 30 schools, the department *animation et jeune public* works with all schools from the Parisian area and reaches another 20,000 children. These schools that attend a performance receive a set of materials and activities such as information packs to prepare the children in class, workshops, meetings with artists, all vital to lead into a perfect visit to the opera.

“B” is challenged by the fact that the schools’ demand is bigger than the places the Opera House can offer. *‘It is a hard job to make the right choices and give as many schools as possible the chance to attend a performance over the years. When preparing the seating of a performance the department animation et jeune public aims for the best possible mix in the auditorium. The same mix is looked after when planning workshops and meetings before a performance, based on accessibility and feasibility’*. “B” is convinced, though, that *‘if the Opéra stops organizing the preparatory stage and starts to sell the performances as such, it would take about two years to see the attendance of the performances drop’*. “B” gives the example of a colleague of a different Parisian Cultural Institution also organising performances for schools. She has no control over the seating of school matinees and there is no preparative work linked with the performance, which seems to result in empty seats instead of a full auditorium. This is not the case at the ONP. Schools know that when they book a performance at the Opera, they get extra quality and extra background to the show, which is included in the price of the ticket. This is what makes the education programme for youngsters at ONP different from other organisations in Paris.

The educational work in relation to the wider cultural context

In relation to the wider cultural context, a lot has changed in the policy on music education in France over the last twenty years. In the 1980s the ‘mission musicale’, an initiative of the Education Nationale (National Education Department), developed and grouped all musical activities proposed to schools and launched activities between schools and musical departments. This mission worked well, but has lost its strength today because the recent policy on education (law number 2005-38) sets the arts at school aside in favour of priorities to raise the training level of the young French : *‘des priorités pour élever le niveau de formation des jeunes Français: faire réussir tous les élèves, redresser la situation de l'enseignement des langues, mieux garantir l'égalité des chances et favoriser l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes et l'emploi. La loi engage la modernisation de l'Éducation nationale selon trois axes: mieux faire respecter les valeurs de la République, mieux organiser les établissements et les enseignements, mieux gérer le système éducatif.’* (priorities are to make all pupils succeed, rectify the situation of language teaching, a better guarantee to equal opportunity and support the professional insertion of the young people and employment. The law engages the modernization of national education according to three axes: to gain a better respect for the values of the Republic, to increase the quality of the educational institutions and lessons, to ameliorate the educational system) (Loi n° 2005-38). To tackle this there is at the moment a large action by the ministry of culture and the Ministry of National Education to bring both culture and education closer to one another in order to develop the Arts at school. Since 1993 Commissions have been put into place to relaunch artistic education.

While reflecting on this wider cultural context “B” is very firm. A lot has changed since she started working at the Opera House and not all for the best, since the relaunch seems to go very slowly: *‘It is now one year and a half-year later and there have been two meetings with the sector’* according to “B”. She has the impression that the new action functions as an alibi. In November 2005, she was invited to a

large meeting at the ministry, *but what happened there is not really connected to reality* says “B”. Thus she is very sceptical, because since “B” is active in the world of musical education she has not seen anything else than what she calls ‘*a kind of cat and mouse game between the ministry of culture and education and often it depends on the composition of the government at that moment, whether things go smoothly or more complicated*’. And she quotes the following to illustrate this:

Quand on a un gouvernement de gauche le travail est plus simple et quand on a un gouvernement droit, on repart en arrière pour la culture. Ce n'est pas un secret. (when one has a left wing government things run smoother than with a right wing government. The latter means a step back for culture. That is not a secret)

So depending on the type of government, culture – and more specifically the Arts - benefit either more or less from the policy. “B” refers to the shift from the socialist party to the current right wing republican party, which resulted in a less positive climate for culture. But this does not mean that “B” is not at all times positive and cooperative. The department is always willing to take part in working groups and reflection sessions at national, regional and local level and on different topics. As such the ONP is at the moment engaged in a working group on the accessibility of mentally disabled visitors in cultural institutions. And two years ago the ONP and seven other Parisian institutions, all proposing programmes for young people, have joined forces in promoting high quality activities for youngsters and adults to discover art in its broadest sense. *Emmenez nous au spectacle* (take us to a performance) proposes the programme of the different partners and launches new initiatives such as a workshop on artistic criticism for young spectators. With the help of a professional journalist they learn to see and listen in a different way.

Future perspectives

“B” wants to work harder on the ‘*école du spectateur*’ in the future.

For children visiting the performances in school matinees, the add-ons are fine, but for families attending the other performances, or individuals, there is still a lot of work to be done. The work with the seven other institutions in ‘Emmenez nous au spectacle’ is already a step in that direction.

But there are other elements that can be added, such as for instance the programme leaflets for the big auditorium. They could be adapted for the young visitors and to those that join the opera for the first time. “B” points at the booklet *Le petit spectateur* produced by the Théâtre National Jeune Public de Strasbourg, about a little girl convincing her mother to go to the theatre. On the other hand “B” likes to start again with the creation of operas for/by young people, and to do so takes part in all kinds of collaborations with other colleagues such as the Atelier Lyrique for example.

III.2.7 Education narrative in context

During the course of the interview it became clear that “B” indeed has a strong belief about her work at the ONP, and the last wish illustrates this particularly. The interview also highlighted that “B”’s beliefs are strongly linked with her personal background. Her parents have influenced her preference for contemporary music. This preference had an influence on her musical education, since contemporary composers and electro-acoustic music were at the centre of it, and shaped her vision on the work she does, a vision that has stayed clear throughout her career. Her focus on the pedagogy and the creative aspect of her work, can be found throughout her line of thinking about the work she does. Although there have been changes in management this did not influence her basic philosophy, it only changed her ways of working and as she explains, when she points to the challenges, that there is a balance to be found between what she believes is the right thing to do, and what the

management wants to see happening. This illustrates that a change in management, does not necessarily involve a change in philosophy about opera education. The education department had been installed because the management of the House at the time was looking for ways to answer the policy's demand expressed through the new protocol between culture and education (1983) and through the change in cultural policy towards creativity and invention. "B"'s philosophy answered this demand at the time and did not alter over time, but her ways of working did. The opening of the Théâtre Bastille, with two small auditoriums, offered new opportunities, and made her work shift from workshops to an imitation programme for a new audience. She altered the type of activities in a way that they matched the wishes of the different management teams.

From the narrative we learn that she is not particularly keen on opera, but she did stay on the job, because of her initial drive as a music teacher to initiate people to a genre they do not know in a creative way.

To "B" giving youngsters the chance to experience what opera/dance is about, through creating their own performance, is the way to teach them what music, opera and dance involves. In the end they might find out that it is not something they feel acquainted with, but at least this offers them the possibility to explain why they appreciate these artforms or not, a view that illustrates what Johnson highlights when he says that one has to know about the artform in order to to give it a place within a person's cultural choice (Johnson 2002:116). Although the practical experience is crucial to "B" when opening up the artform to a new audience, there is something else that kept popping up during the interview and that is in line with the French opera tradition. To "B" knowing about the artform and knowing about the codes linked with that artform are not only linked with cultural choice, it is more linked with the circumstances in which the artform is brought to the audience. Here she differs from her colleagues in that to her the performer, as well as the spectator has a role to play in a performance. Whereas for the other practitioners the presentation of a first class performance involves good circumstances, good singers and a good

staging (see narratives “D” and “E”), for “B” the audience also has a responsibility and that it is up to her team to make sure these youngsters possess the ‘right tools’ to engage themselves in the performance. This belief is totally in line with Vilar’s thoughts about *l’Ecole du Spectateur* expressed when he became director of the Théâtre National Populaire (the National Popular Theatre, TNP), a theatre for a different audience from the bourgeoisie that attended for instance the opera at the end of the 50s and in the 60s. He saw it as his assignment to bring theatre to people that would not enter the other theatres/opera houses in Paris and he wanted to make sure they would enjoy it by offering them a performance of the highest quality: *Le Théâtre National Populaire s’est, une fois pour toutes [...] fixé pour tâche de donner au public populaire des oeuvres théâtrales de valeur, interprétées par une Compagnie de haute tenu, dans un presentation de qualité (the TNP has identified for itself the task to offer the popular audience theatre works of quality, performed by a high level company, brought together in a performance of quality)* (Vilar 1978:278). He would provide performances of the highest quality, but he expected from the audience on the other hand also a critical engagement in the performance they were about to see, which leads to a different performance, than when a spectator just attends a performance (Fleury 2002:37-39). “B”’s view is thus rooted in the French history of performing and therefore not so surprisingly when analysed within the wider cultural context of France. Jean Vilar’s model is still cited as a revolutionary model (Fleury 2002 and 2003), throughout the country from, the North to the South, the audience development programme is titled *Ecole du Spectateur* and tries to have the same sensitivity for the audience-performer relationship.

III.3 Case study 3

III.3.1 Snapshot As.Li.Co. and Teatro Sociale di Como

Per cinquemila bambini, il magico mondo del melodrama è oggi un po' più vicino, più familiare, nella speranza che se ne ricordino anche fra qualche anno, quando saranno adulti.

(For 50,000 children the magic world of melodrama has come a bit closer and a bit more familiar today. Hopefully they will remember this experience once they are adults) (Cerrato 2003).

TEATRO SOCIALE DI COMO
since 2002 managed by
As. Li. Co

Main auditorium 999 seats
24 employees

Photo 8: Teatro Sociale di Como © As.Li.Co.

Opera is an integral part of Italy's cultural heritage. As has been outlined in the literature review to this study it was in Florence that about 400 years ago the first opera was performed. Until about 1630-1640 this artform was exclusively reserved to the royalty and the aristocrats in Northern Italy concentrated in Florence, Mantua, Parma and Bologna. After that, opera reached a new stage when Rome and Venice became the new centres of the artform and especially when in 1637 the first

public theatre Teatro San Cassino (Venice) opened its doors. Opera was no longer reserved for the royalty, but became an artform for the wider public (Weiss 2002:35; Carter 1996:13; Robbins Landon 1991:87.). Shortly after that, the artform found its way to other parts in Italy and had been exported throughout Europe. The artform, as well as the houses where it was performed, became an Italian trademark. Italian opera and Italian opera houses could be found in places such as Paris, Vienna and Brussels (Bossuyt 1990:5; Rosselli 1996; Ashbrook 1996; De Van 2005).

The genre itself was also very sensitive to social circumstances; this is evidenced in the changes in the subject matters of operas within history. At the beginning of the 19th century the themes were closely linked to historical facts. That was the time when the northern Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) entered the picture. His first operas and the “Risorgimento” in Italy went hand in hand. As his first biographer Folchetto noted:

Verdi began to instigate political action with his music. Foreigners will never be able to understand the influence exerted, for a certain period, by the ardent, blazing melodies that Verdi conceived when the situations, or even isolated lines of verse, recalled the unhappy state of Italy, or her memories, or her hopes (Porter 1995:638).

His operas were a success. The arias of his operas could be heard in the streets of Milan. Everyone just knew the melody. Most of his works premièred in what was by then the principal theatre in Italy, namely the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. Strategically Milan was a city close to Paris and Vienna (one of the big centres of Italian opera in the 17th century). And alongside the river Po one could and still can recognise a density of small, middle-scale and large houses fit for lyrical music. The Scala was and still is one of the prestigious opera houses in the world (Porter 1995; De Van 2005). The radiance of the Scala had its effect on the other theatres in the region and on the artform as a whole.

As.Li.Co./ Teatro Sociale di Como

In this musical landscape As.Li.Co. (Associazione Lyrica e Concertistica Italiana), the Italian concert and lyrical organiser, based in Milan was founded in 1949. It is one of the only self-contained training and performance companies in Europe. The training course for young artists, *Opera Domani* (As.Li.Co.'s education programme) and the main stage productions are one and the same for the organisation. The company's guiding principle is that the future of opera lies in nurturing today the artists and the audience of tomorrow. The company has been expanding and growing steadily since 1949, because its vision on opera productions and on working with young artists is slowly embracing Italy in three ways:

First, *Opera Domani* is at the moment the recognised model on which other Italian opera companies shape their educational activities.

Secondly, within the region of Lombardy opera goers today attend either a performance at La Scala in Milan or an 'As.Li.Co.'-production in one of the regional theatres in Lombardy. This is a result from the Circuiti Lirici Lombardo (CLL) that was established in 1983 and links the theatres in Como, Brescia, Bergamo, Pavia and Cremona with each other. One could ask where La Scala sits in this construction. The opera house did engage in the CLL. It supports the circuit through the provision of costumes and sets for all CLL productions, through the participation of a member of staff on the jury of the competition for young singers and through a discount for subscribers to the CLL programme for tickets at La Scala.

But above all, for more than 50 years now, As. Li.Co. has been the first step in the career of the most renowned singers such as Katia Ricciarelli, Renata Scotto and Luis Alva. Young singers, up to the age of 32, can compete for the training programme. In the first 30 years the competition for young singers was only open to Italian singers. From 1994 onwards it expanded to include the residents of the European Union countries and in 2002 all European singers could apply. Each year the number of non-Italian singers grows. Today's competitors auditioning today do

not only go for As.Li.Co.'s training course and production, but compete also for specific roles in the upcoming CLL opera season and Opera Domani's spring production.

2002 was a memorable year in As.Li.Co.'s history since the organisation became the managing company of the Teatro Sociale di Como. Working from a theatre offered new perspectives for the future. Whereas previously the company needed to be touring, because it did not have its own theatre, it now had a basis for its own activities (rehearsal space and concert space) as well as the possibility to enlarge its programme in this 19th century building designed by Guiseppe Cusi for Duke Giampetro Porro. The theatre opened in 1813 with two productions *Adriano in Siria* written by Marcos Antonio da Fonseca (1762-1830), a Portugese composer, and *I Pretendenti Delusi* of Giuseppe Mosca (1772-1839), a south Italian composer. Throughout history it has been a challenge to keep the theatre open. Remarkable is the fact that during the Second World War, after bombings in 1943, the Teatro Sociale di Como became the host theatre for the staff and musicians of the bombed Teatro alla Scala in Milan until the latter was restored. The theatre needed to close its doors for restoration works in 1984, but not for too long since the Società dei Palchettisti (conserving the building) wanted the City of Como to reopen it even when the works were not finished yet, so in October 1988 the Teatro Sociale was open to performances again, but without a full programme. For that the theatre had to wait until 2002, when As.Li.Co. received the right to manage the theatre and the name became Teatro Sociale di Como – As.Li.Co. (Teatro Sociale di Como (2005) [online] 2006).

The relationship between As.Li.Co., the CLL and the other theatres in Northern Italy changes from season to season. Generally, As.Li.Co. acts as the sole organiser of a production, or the organisation works in partnership with one of more members of CLL for a production touring within the network. The same co-production scheme may exist with the other northern Italian theatres (As.Li.Co. [online] 2006). And then there is the project 'Pocket Opera', which started in 2006 and which brings chamber versions of major operas into the smaller, historical theatres in the northern

part of the country. These theatres do not have the technical means to stage a full opera production. Thus this project enables these theatres to offer their audience the opportunity to experience the finest works of the opera tradition (Teatriamoci 2006).

All these collaborations are set to intensify in the future and after a first period of settling in Como, plans are evolving there too as Bruno Dal Bon, As.Li.Co.'s general manager, explained at the start of the 2005-2006 season:

‘Doppo una prima fase, in cui ci siamo radicati sul territorio e abbiamo consolidato la nostra immagine, con una sempre più intensa collaborazione con le istituzioni, ora abbiamo prospettive a lungo termine: dobbiamo pensare in grande per volare alto, per avere un teatro sempre più aperto e gremito, per offrire un luogo in cui non solo ci si può divertire con l’acuto di un cantante o un passo di danza, ma anche condividere una forte esperienza culturale’.

(After a first stage in which we touched ground and consolidated our image through a more intense collaboration with the institutions here, we now have a long term perspective: we need to think largely to move higher, to have a theatre that is more open and full. To offer a place that is more than a place of divertissement in listening to singing or seeing some dancing, but also to live through a strong cultural experience).

Dal Bon believes that after a period of settling down (2002 to 2005) the company now has to seize the opportunity to work more in-depth and with a long-term vision towards a more open and more filled theatre. *‘A theatre where the visitor has the chance to become part of a special cultural experience’*, which according to Dal Bon is necessary *‘because there are still a lot of people that did not share this experience yet’* (Morandotti and Dubini 2005:II).

Culture and education in Italy

When studying the legislation in Italy article 9 of the Italian constitution lists as one of the fundamental principles *La Repubblica promuove lo sviluppo della cultura e la ricerca scientifica e tecnica. Tutela il paesaggio e il patrimonio storico e artistico della Nazione* (1947). In other words a pledge: *to promote the development of culture and research and to protect the landscape and the historical as well as the artistic heritage of the nation*. This relates back to Italy's rich artistic history. The new Ministry for Culture, in full *Il Ministero per I beni e le attività culturali* (the Ministry for cultural heritage and cultural affairs) has since 1998 been in charge of culture, sports, arts and cultural heritage. The general directorate for performing arts and sports supports the promotion and development of these disciplines. Music is integrated within this department (Ministero per I Beni e le Attività Culturali MiBAC (*Ministry for cultural heritage and cultural activities*) [online] 2006).

It is the 800/67 law of 14 August 1967 *Nuovo ordinamento degli enti lirici e delle attività musicali* (the new ordering of the lyrical entities and of musical affairs; known as the Corona Law, named after Achille Corona who introduced the law to the parliament) that involved a major reform of the musical and lyrical sector in Italy. The legislation was an important instigation to the changes in the musical life of the 1970s. For the first time the cultural, social and formative functions of musical activity had been recognized. The law outlined in detail the way subsidies would be allocated to the lyrical and symphonic organisations and lined up the organisations in different categories. Each category was given its objectives. The Teatro dell'Opera di Roma received a special status at 'state' level and the Teatro alla Scala in Milan is recognized at national level as a very important institution. Both are part of the 'independent entities' including the Teatro Comunale di Bologna, the Teatro Comunale di Firenze, the Teatro Comunale dell'Opera di Genova, the Teatro San Carlo di Napoli, the Teatro Massimo di Palermo, the Teatro Regio di Torino, the Teatro Comunale Giuseppe Verdi in Trieste, the Teatro La Fenice di Venezia and the Arena di Verona.

‘Gli enti autonomi lirici e le istituzioni concertistiche assimilate hanno personalità giuridica di diritto pubblico e sono sottoposti alla vigilanza del ministero del turismo e dello spettacolo. Essi non perseguono scopi di lucro ed hanno come fine la diffusione dell’arte musicale, la formazione professionale di quadri artistici e l’educazione musicale della collettività’ (art 5).

Article 5 states that *‘the assimilated independent lyrical and musical institutions are of public right and depend on the Ministry of Tourism and Performances. These entities are non-profit organisations and are supposed to disseminate music, provide professional training for artists as well as music education’.*

Art. 28 of the same legislation marks the ‘traditional theatres’ in the provinces, including Petruzzelli di Bari, Grande di Brescia, Massimo Bellini di Catania, Sociale di Como, Ponchielli di Cremona, Comunale di Ferrara, Sociale di Mantova, Comunale di Modena, Coccia di Novara, Regio di Parma, Municipale di Piacenza, Verdi di Pisa, Municipale di Reggio Emilia, Sociale di Rovigo, Comunale di Treviso. These theatres are supposed to promote, facilitate and coordinate musical activities throughout their region. The Ministry designated an important role to the Commissione Centrale per la Musica, in keeping track of the problems in the musical field and in controlling the attribution of the law of which the repartition of the subsidies is the most important one. Over the years the law has been adapted. The second major change in the musical legislation dates from 30 April 1985 with the *Nuova disciplina degli interventi dello stato a favore dello Spettacolo* (new series of state interventions in favour of the performing arts; DL (legal decree) 163/1985), which installed the Fondo Unico per lo Spettacolo (The integrated fund for performing arts). One fund for all performing arts organisations of which 45% was provided for music and dance, 25% for film, 15% for theatre, and 1 % for touring performances.

In 2002 a series of criteria and modalities of distribution for the contributions to musical activities was put in to place stating that the musical offer in Italy should try

to appeal to a new audience: *‘favorire la qualità artistica e il costante rinnovamento dell’offerta musicale italiana, e consentire ad un pubblico sempre più ampio di accedere alla cultura musicale, con particolare riguardo alle nuove generazioni ed alle categorie meno favorite’* (support the artistic quality and the continuous innovation of the musical offer in Italy, as well as appeal to an bigger audience to attend a musical performance, especially focussing on new generations and on less fortunate categories (Regolamento 47/2002). It is the first time that specific audience groups are mentioned in the legislation. This article wants to encourage cultural organisations to open up their provision to a wider audience with a focus on ‘new’ generations and people that are somehow deprived from attending a concert or a show. If As.Li.Co. was one of the first companies to start in 1996-1997 with an outreach programme to meet the above mentioned demands, more companies across the country started with special programmes about 2002 (Giraldi 2005:29-30). In December 2005 an addendum was made to the legislation in order to be able to reduce the amount of funding to cultural institutions due to economical problems (DL 281/2005), which might have impact on the programmes for youngsters in the future. The latter illustrates how vulnerable the entities are when policy changes.

In Italy, education is state-controlled and all schools, both public and private, have to comply with the curricula and teaching methods laid out by the MIUR (the ministry of public education, universities and research). Education is compulsory and free of charge for all children between the ages of 6 and 16. In the legal decree 76 dated April 2005 it is noted that:

La Repubblica promuove l'apprendimento in tutto l'arco della vita e assicura a tutti pari opportunità di raggiungere elevati livelli culturali e di sviluppare le capacità e le competenze, attraverso conoscenze e abilità, generali e specifiche, coerenti con le attitudini e le scelte personali, adeguate all'inserimento nella vita sociale e nel mondo del lavoro, anche con riguardo alle dimensioni locali, nazionale ed europea (The republic promotes learning throughout life, and offers everyone the opportunity to catch up with higher cultural levels. It also offers opportunity to develop the capacity and competence, through general and specific knowledge as well as skills,

in line with personal behavior and choices, needed to be able to integrate adequately into social and professional life, and with a view on the local, national and European dimension.) (DL 76/2005).

So according to this legislation it is the ambition of the Republic to promote learning throughout the cycle of life and to give everyone an equal chance to gain the skills to keep up with all aspects of everyday life. Music and art are also part of the education. It is compulsory in primary school and becomes optional for the first years of secondary school level. 'Art and imagination' in primary school is at the same level as language and music education and is seen as an opportunity for children to express themselves and communicate. For the first grade of secondary school music education specifically should promote the active participation of the students both as listeners as well as performers. They should also be able to analyse the phenomenon of 'sound' in everyday life (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione (*Ministry of Public Education*) (2006-2007) [online] 2006; DL 59/2004 and 76/2005 as well as circolare 84 and 85).

Although the curriculum gives room for artistic and creative projects at school the general meaning of schoolmusic is not always positive since a real structure for musical education in the compulsory school system seems to be missing (Balestra and Malaguti 2003:27). So when we take into account that lyrical theatres should reach a 'wider', 'more diverse' and younger audience (as mentioned in Regolamento 47/2002) then as Balestra and Malaguti continue, *Cercare un nuovo pubblico risulta dunque un'esigenza vitale per molti enti che deve essere contestualizzata in un orizzonte più ampio di formazione del pubblico*, looking for a new audience results in a vital requirement for a lot of entities that have to be contextualized in wider setting to stimulate the awareness of the public to distinguish and to appreciate (2003:28).

III.3.2 Company mission statement

Both encouraging and promoting opera are central to As.Li.Co.'s objectives. Its aim is threefold: to identify young, exceptional singers; to provide musical and theatre trainings for these artists; and to produce opera performances of the highest level in which these artists have the opportunity to display their skills. In principle all As.Li.Co.'s activities involve these aims. There is:

- The annual competition selecting promising singers. The laureates receive a training course and take part in opera productions; as such they have the opportunity to develop their talents on stage.
- The EurOperaStudio of which As.Li.Co. is an active member. This European network aims to organise and promote opera studio work (small scale opera productions with young singers) at a European level between training centres and opera theatres.
- Opera Domani, a project conceived and run by As.Li.Co. and the Lombardian Region since 1997, in order to prepare a young and new audience to opera through the training of teachers and through the presentation of specific productions for children.

And since January 2002, As.Li.Co. has managed the regional theatre Teatro Sociale di Como. The programme involves theatre, dance, opera and concerts. It tries to reach a broad audience with performances at the theatre in Como and in the Lombardian region.

III.3.3 General view on performances and audiences

As.Li.Co. is a small company with limited resources, thus when looking at audience numbers one has to take into account that the season runs largely from December to April and that touring productions are not integrated in these audience numbers.

Thus in 2003-2004 the organisation reached about 17,200 people (Table 10) in 2004-2005 about 1,200 more. Since As.Li.Co. runs the regional theatre in Como their programme is not restricted any longer to opera and lyrical works. Compared to 2003-2004 the theatre takes a more important place than the lyrical (opera) works in 2004-2005.

Table 10: Audience Numbers per genre at
As.Li.Co./Teatro Sociale di Como in 2003-2005

Teatro Sociale di Como		
	Genre	Audience Numbers
2003-2004	Lyrical	8,200
	Dance	2,000
	Theatre	6,000
	Concerts	1,000
	Total	17,200
	Genre	Audience Numbers
2004-2005	Lyrical	6,154
	Dance	1,800
	Theatre	8,500
	Concerts	2,000
	Total	18,454

Not included in this table but interesting to see where in terms of audience numbers, is the *Opera Domani*-project and the *young audiences programme* at the Teatro Sociale di Como (TS Junior). The two projects reached 12,200 youngsters in 2003-2004 and increased to 18,720 in 2004-2005. The latter shows that this youngsters-project reaches as many attendees as does the programme for the general public.

III.3.4 General view of the budget

Fig. 10a and b: income TSC 2004 and 2005

As.Li.Co. worked with a stable budget for the past two years, 2004-05 (figure 10 a and b). About 51% is state funded and the other half involves ticket-income and sponsorship. The rather rigid situation of this budget makes it difficult for the organisation to grow. In December 2005 the government announced budget cuts for cultural institutions up to 15%. A new government has been put into place at the beginning of 2006, so this might alter certain decisions in the future.

Fig. 11a and b: expenditures TSC 2004 and 2005

As.Li.Co. is the smallest company in this research, but has the highest investment in its educational programme. 60% of the expenditures are reserved to the artistic programme; 30 % goes to personnel (figure 11a and b). 7% of As.Li.Co.'s overall budget (€ 700,000 in 2005) is invested in the Opera Domani-project. The other sources of income are € 100,000 from the Lombarian Region, € 150,000 from the

Fondazione Cariplo, contributions of the cities taking part in the project and ticket income.

III.3.5 Education within the company

In 2006, Opera Domani celebrates its tenth anniversary. Today one finds other education projects in Italian opera houses, such as ‘imparolopera’ (learn opera) in Parma or Scuola all’Opera in Ancona, but when As.Li.Co. started its education programme it was a pioneer of its kind. La Fenice, the Opera House in Venice, did some education work in Venice and the most active theatre in the field in those days was the Teatro Regio in Torino. It was the first Italian theatre to realize the importance of education programmes for a new generation. Apart from educational projects the theatre also produces operas especially written for children (Giraldi, 2005: 29-30; Teatro Regio Torino 2002). But the first company to set up an opera production unit for children, accompanied with a full training programme for teachers, in order to give them the tools to work on opera in their classes, was As.Li.Co.

III.3.5.1 History of the educational programme at As.Li.Co.

The educational programme Opera Domani was developed about a year after the new management started at As.Li.Co. The organisation noted that in the field of youth theatre a lot of interesting projects for youngsters happened, but that in the field of music this was completely missing. The organisation also realised that its audience was growing older and that the rich musical tradition Italy had and still has risked being hidden from the knowledge of a whole generation. They therefore reflected how they could reach the ‘new generations’ and make music/opera more appealing to the young ones by presenting work for the youngest generation. This resulted in a programme centred on a performance of an adapted version of a major opera work addressed to primary school children. The young singers that won the As.Li.Co contest sing the opera.

In order to prepare the children attending the performance, a teacher-training programme has been put into place. It offers teachers the tools to introduce their pupils to the work they are going to see. Completely in line with Italian tradition, and with some nostalgia for the old days when every Italian knew the most important opera arias by heart, the children learn a couple of arias and choruses beforehand in class, so that they can sing along with the artists on stage during the performance. This links in with Italian Opera tradition from the past, when people seem to have sung the arias from Verdi's opera on the street as if it were popular songs (Porter 1995; De Van 2005).

Photo 9: Opera Domani Performance © As. Li. Co

Opera Domani started in 1996, with its first performance in 1996, and was and still is a joint initiative with the authorities of the Lombardian Region. The first opera restored was an adapted version of Christoph Willibald Gluck's (1714-1787) *Isola di Merlino*. 7,000 children saw the performance, 180 teachers took part in the project and eight cities/villages from the Lombardian partnered with As.Li.Co. to make this performance tour through the region. The way of working, with a small staff but with active collaboration of the teachers and the theatres involved, makes it possible to reach a large group of participants. From then until 2002, the project increased in numbers both of audiences as well as teachers taking part (see Table 11). Then the number of teachers involved in the project stagnated at 1300 teachers since it was the maximum capacity the project could deal with according to the resources both human and financial, in order to keep up the quality standards As.Li.Co. wanted to guarantee. They want the performances to be exquisite experiences for this young audience.

Table 11: An overview of productions, frequentation, number of teachers taking part project, and cities involved in the Opera Domani project 1997-2006

An overview of productions, frequentation and cities involved in the Opera Domani project				
Year	Production	Audience	Teachers	Cities/Villages involved
1997	Isola di Merlino (G. W. Gluck)	7,000	180	Cesano Boscone, Cologno Monzese, Como, Lecco, Milano, Pavia, Varese e Vimercate
1998	Isola + Il Flauto Magico (W.A.Mozart)	15,000	300	Brescia, Como, Cremona, Lecco, Lodi, Mantova, Milano, Pavia, Sondrio, Varese e Venezia
1999	Il Flauto + La Fiaba di Cenerentola (G. Rossini)	25,000	780	Tutte e province della Lombardia
2000	Don Chisciotte (J. Massenet)	30,000	880	Tutte e province della Lombardia + Trento
2001	Falstaff (G. Verdi)	35,000	1,200	Tutte e province della Lombardia + trento, Piacenza, Bolgona e Venezia
2002	Guiglielmo Tell (G. Rossini)	36,000	1,300	Le province della Lombardia e diverse città di altre regioni
2003	Orfeo ed Euredice (G.W.Gluck)	38,000	1,300	Le province della Lombardia e diverse città di altre regioni
2004	L'elisir d'amore di (G. Donizetti)	45,000	1,300	Le province della Lombardia e diverse città di altre regioni
2005	L'Amore delle tre melarance (S. Prokof'ev)	46,000	1,300	Le province della Lombardia e diverse città di altre regioni
2006	Don Giovanni (W.A.Mozart)	50,000	2,000	Le province della Lombardia e diverse città di altre regioni

For the tenth edition with an adapted version of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's (1756-1791) *Don Giovanni*, an increase of participants is again expected. The jubilee version is part of the festivities organized around the commemoration of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's birthday 250 years ago, and it sits in RESEO's European Project *Mozart Ways* (exploring educational projects based on Mozart's work). This resulted in an increase of resources and thus in an increase again of the number of teachers involved. More cities than ever take part in the 'Opera Domani'- project. Prognoses are that the jubilee version will reach 50,000 youngsters and family members as well as 2,000 teachers taking part in the training programme.

II.3.5.2 Educational mission

Based on internal documents and on information available on the website of Opera Domani, the following aim could be highlighted:

Opera is not part of young people and thus unknown to them, thus they cannot relate to the four centuries of opera that is part of their cultural heritage, so through a well-established, comprehensive opera education programme, which is stimulating and creative, As.Li.Co. wants to make opera appealing to these youngsters.

With the ‘Opera Domani’ – programme the collaborators want to make young people curious for opera and initiate a love of opera. Therefore one needs to work on a continual basis. Thus Opera Domani decided not to work directly with the youngsters, but with their teachers. The programme helps them to familiarize their pupils with the artform and to prepare them for the opera performance linked with the project.

III.3.5.3 Structure: Place of education in the company

Both in the structure of the Company (As.Li.Co.), as in the structure of the Teatro Sociale di Coma, *Opera Domani* is classified as a project within both (table 12). As mentioned in the snapshot on As.Li.Co., *Opera Domani*, although perceived in the organogram as a project, is at the center of the Company’s philosophy (see p.127) and as a prominent place in the Company’s overall budget (see fig. 11 a and b).

Table 12: Place of education within As.Li.Co./TSC (As.Li.Co. website [online] 2006).

General Management: <i>Direttore artistico</i> <i>Amministratore delegato</i> <i>Direttore organizzazione e sviluppo</i>	Theatrical services: <i>Coordinamento servizi teatrali</i> <i>Biglietteria</i> <i>Biglietteria palchi</i> <i>Servizi teatrali e custodia</i>
Artistic Department: <i>Coordinamento attività lirica</i> <i>Segreteria artistica</i> <i>Curatore programmazione teatrale</i> <i>Consulente musicale attività formative</i> <i>Consulente Circuiti teatrali lombardi</i> <i>Servizi musicali</i> <i>Maestri preparatori</i>	Projects: Opera domani... : <i>Responsabile progetto</i> <i>Consulente progetto didattico</i> <i>Segreteria organizzativa (3 pers.)</i> Coro As.Li.Co: <i>Maestro del coro</i> <i>Segreteria organizzativa</i> Coro Voci Bianche: <i>Maestro del coro</i> <i>Impostazione vocale</i> Scuole: <i>Scuola di danza classica</i> <i>Scuola di danza moderna</i> <i>Scuola di teatro</i>
Administration: <i>Responsabile controllo di gestione</i> <i>Amministrazione attività teatrali</i>	
Production Department: <i>Direttore di produzione</i> <i>Segreteria di produzione</i> <i>+ collaboratore</i>	
Publicity: <i>Responsabile Promozione e Ufficio stampa</i> <i>Relazioni internazionali</i> <i>Promozione e gruppi</i> <i>Associazioni e scuole</i>	
Communication and graphical design: <i>Media e graphic designer</i> <i>Consulenza e sviluppo Web</i> <i>Consulenza marketing</i>	

The president of As.Li.Co. is the artistic director of the Teatro Sociale di Como. The organisational and development director at TCS is named director of programming for TCS at As.Li.Co. and is also project leader for *Opera Domani*.

III.3.5.4 Education Programme

The education programme is based on training sessions for teachers, workshops in schools and the performances across the Lombardian region. The teachers are required to participate in two meetings (8 hours; 12 hours for those who are participating for the first time). These meetings take place in the regional cities that

host a performance in their theatre that year. Currently sixteen cities, from Trento to Fermo, take part in the project. A staff of 7 rotates between these cities to prepare the teachers.

The training sessions offer teachers various ‘lesson plans’ that can be implemented in their teaching schedule for the months prior to the opera performance. Thus the teacher can choose the most appropriate model for their class.

Photo 10: Teacher singing in class © As.Li.Co.

All models are based on an interactive structure, requiring creative input from the pupils. The method used is called ‘strada-giocattolo’ (street game). The word *game* is applied in a sense that the programme uses an object that is manipulated, assembled and disassembled if applicable. It can be worked with in groups or on an individual basis. Various school levels are addressed: elementary (6-11 years old), and secondary (11 to 14 years old). Thus different skills are stimulated; at the youngest level the programme concentrates on the development of movement skills, for the older students the project focuses on musical analysis and on the interdisciplinary aspect of opera, e.g. with history and sociology (see outline for the project of Don Giovanni table 15). Carlo Delfrati, responsible for the pedagogical part of Opera Domani, believes that *‘it is important for young people to understand that opera is not simply a means of entertainment. If one knows how to make the opera speak to us, one finds out that it has a lot to tell us about life in general, about people’s lives more specifically, about society and history’* (Speech to members of RESEO 2005). Take for example the programme based on Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*. Several aspects of opera are integrated in the introductory process to the Opera performance (Defrati 2005:3):

- **Getting to know the libretto** (or parts of the libretto) linked with recitation for example each group learns one scene. Discuss the characters' personality before listening to how Mozart portrays them.
- **Interpret the events of the opera using motor skills** such as gestures, pantomime, and dance. Or perhaps with drawings, comic strips. Visualize scenery, costumes, sketches.
- **Reinvent the story** incorporating a series of ingredients that can be used: characters or situations. Then compare the invented story with the one of Da Ponte.
- **Listen** to scenes of the opera and appreciate the contribution of **the music** to the plot.
- **Add music to the stories that have been created**, either with recorded music or with sound effects created by the participants.
- **Analyze the literary and musical aspects** of *Don Giovanni*.
- **Stage a reduced version** of *Don Giovanni*.

Teachers for the first time involved in the programme are invited to a preliminary meeting including initial activities wider than the scope of opera. The guidelines followed are that:

- music for children is fun and amusing. It is also a form of communication;
- there is also music in the spoken word
- singing is a two dimensional language including words and music

Singing with their students is a crucial part of the programme, since the children will sing parts of the opera performed with the artists during the performance. Every season the programme is evaluated and adapted where needed. The choices of the works performed are also influential to the outline of the didactic course. At the moment Opera Domani reaches about 1,500 teachers, who involve 45,000 students in the project and eighty performances in 16 cities are given. Not all performances are exclusively open to schools. Since 2004, family performances are also part of the programme.

Because of Opera Domani's tenth anniversary, As.Li.Co. decided to organise a major survey questioning the teachers that took part in the programme over the last 5 years (about 800). The findings show that 33% of the teachers came to an Opera Domani production for the 4th or 5th time in a row and are thus very loyal to the programme, they are convinced that the project leads to a remarkable increase of musical knowledge to their pupils. The following list gives the most striking outcomes of the questionnaire on 10 years Opera Domani (unpublished results Opera Domani 2006):

- 72% of the teachers questioned were convinced that participating to the project resulted in a remarkable increase in the musical education of the pupils.
- 91.8% of them stated that the project had a major effect on the singing skills of their pupils.
- 89.1% believed it improved the pupils listening skills.
- 32.4% believe it had impact on the development of pupils' imagination
- 32.4% were positive about the development of their pupils' knowledge of music history.

When asked what they did to prepare their students in class, activities laid out were for instance: 86% music making, 70% preparing to listen to opera, 67% pantomime and playing scenes, 67% working with visual arts in the frame of the opera theme, 59% work on music for the performance, 51% work on the link between music and word in singing, and 40% on inventing variations to the story of the opera they were going to see.

A total of 39% of the teachers believed that children having taken part in the programme do go spontaneously to a lyrical performance, with 51% stating they could not answer the question. More than 70% of the teachers answered positively to the question whether the training helped them ‘pedagogically’, a percentage that grows to over 80% when asked if the theatrical and the singing training was of use to their work in class (unpublished results Opera Domani 2006).

When As.Li.Co. started to manage the Teatro Sociale di Como (January 2002). This did change the provision of activities for schools and in training provisions. Thus nowadays the theatre has a real ‘junior’ section for elementary and secondary school as well as high schools: *Il Sociale Junior*. This is a day-programme with music, theatre and opera for children and young people. Secondary and high schools are also welcome to attend some of the evening performances. The programme is also available for teachers and some parts are open to families.

III.3.6 Education Narrative

The interview took place on 9th of December 2005 at the offices of the Teatro Sociale di Como. The interviewee is managing director at the theatre and has been project leader of Opera Domani since its inception in 1996. In the narrative she will be referred to as “C”.

Personal context

“C” grew up in a very positive atmosphere. Her family’s motto was based on: *Stick together and see things in a positive way*. This has been very important to her. The older she becomes, the more she realises that this positive message from her mother and father is vital. She has one sister and two brothers. The family lived in a big house located in a village outside Milan. The house was always full of people. There was always something going on. In short they were a happy family, with no financial problems. So “C” was never deprived of activities she wanted to do at school.

Her mother and father were very open-minded. The family often went on trips to see other cities, museums, exhibitions, dance performances, art and theatre. “C” did not know until later that her mother did word performances, but does remember she made her children read Shakespeare, all reading one role on after the other.

Her father was an engineer constructing motorways and her mother was a pharmacist. Her father did play the piano and had a broad knowledge of classical music. There was always music on at home. Her mother loved theatre and ballet. Unfortunately she died when “C” turned eighteen. That year “C” went to university to study philosophy. But after a while she decided to follow the two years management course for cultural operators organised by the Piccolo Teatro in Milan. In the second year she started working for an editor who specialised in publishing plays, especially experimental pieces. Thus “C” learned to know all avant-garde companies, some of which are now very famous and tour with prose and lyrical theatre.

First contacts with opera

A personal passion drew “C” to the Teatro alla Scala at the age of 22 – 23 to see opera. She adds *indeed that late*, because before that age – although stimulated by her parents – attending a performance was not something she did spontaneously. “C” blames this to the way the Arts were treated at compulsory school when she was little. There was no stimulus at all.

‘Con la scuola non ho mai fatto niente d’interessante (at school we did not do anything interesting)’ she says, *‘la musica per noi era niente (music did not mean anything to us)’*. And if they would go to one of the scarce theatre performances planned, *‘andava per far casina, perché c’era con nessuna preparazione, nessun gusto. (we would go to make trouble, because we were not prepared and we did not want to go either)’* thus it was a ‘bad’ experience in any sense. Those outings are associated more with the idea of having a day out of class and without courses, than

with the philosophy to go and see a performance or to do something special. Today there is room for workshops and to experience music in a different way. There is a lot of investment to address the arts in a positive manner. “C” recognises she missed this during childhood. She thinks that if school had been more stimulating she would have studied more music. Her passion for music and theatre only came in her twenties. Nowadays she is completely connected to music theatre. When she attends a spoken theatre performance she realises she misses the music.

It is interesting to note here that “C” sees school as the institution that should stimulate a love of the Arts in children and youngsters. Although she grew up in a culturally open-minded family, she did not raise this as determining the artistic choices she made later on, though one might implicitly conclude that the home atmosphere had indeed influenced her future career.

Work in Opera Education at As.Li.Co.

During the first seven to eight years of her professional life, “C” worked in theatre. At the age of 25 she moved to the music sector, first for the music festival in Como that programmed classical and early music, then about three years later for As.Li.Co. It is at the latter that she learned more about opera and lyrical theatre, and that she became really passionate about the artform.

When she entered the organisation about 12 years ago, As.Li.Co. reached a turning point. It was a small, traditional and rather closed kind of company. Bruno Dal Bon became the new manager and asked “C” to come and work at the organisation. Together they developed a new strategy for the company. As.Li.Co. had to become more dynamic, more innovative and needed to present more productions. When the strategy was set “C” entered the company to work for the press office, but after one year she knew she wanted to do something else. So she started to analyse the situation of opera and theatre in the region As.Li.Co. was active in. “C” noticed that there was a dynamism missing in the sector and realised that the audience attending concerts and performances was rather old. Therefore “C” suggested Dal Bon to try

and bring a new dynamism in the operatic field and to focus on children and young people in order to bring them in contact with an important part of Italy's cultural history. He was positive about the idea and proposed that "C" developed a programme, based on what happened within youth theatre at the time, which was already very active in the mid 1990s. *'Abbiamo fatto con volgendero subito Carlo Defrati perché ovviamente ci mancava con la preparazione di didattica e confronti degli insegnanti'*. (The first one to come and reinforce the team was Carlo Defrati, because "C" lacked knowledge on didactic material and on working with teachers).

Originally As.Li.Co. wanted to create a project that would bring Opera closer to the children in a pleasant way. The first version of the project was developed in a playful way. They had to try things out, because it was not something As.Li.Co. had on the programme, and it did not exist in Italy at that time, so they had to see for themselves what worked and what not. Sporadically Italian houses did invite children to a dress rehearsal, but nothing more. As mentioned earlier in this case study the education work at the opera in Italy was scarce when As.Li.Co. started, so "C" focused on what happened on a European scale, and used these experiences whilst designing the structure for the Opera Domani project.

Central to the work is to see how young people can get involved in opera. To do that, *'a capire come avvicinare le ragazze'* one has to understand 'how to reach them'. This drives her in the work she does. "C" focused on young people because this age range fascinates her a lot, although if time would let her she would also develop small projects for little children as well as a symphonic version of Opera Domani since, the Teatre Sociale di Como programmes are wider than opera.

Crucial in this work is that she wants to offer children and young people a positive experience when coming to the theatre. This belief can be related back to the negative experiences she had when she was little and which had a negative effect on how she perceived the arts. This experience implicitly results in a strong need to give young people the chance she missed. It is not mentioned during the interview,

but this thought suggests that she hopes a positive experience might lead to young people being interested in the arts. Though personal choice is defined through more criteria than a good experience; take for instance the influence of friends and/or family (Lievens and Waeye 2005; Bourdieu 1979 a and b; Reay 2004).

Challenges and changes

When asked which changes challenged her work throughout the years “C” mentioned that every year the Opera Domani-programme is evaluated, and adapted where appropriate. The European connection such as the meetings with RESEO-colleagues offers “C” and her team the opportunity to look at this evaluation in a broader and more open way. She gives the European conference on Mozart (which took place at the Teatro Sociale di Como in September 2005) as an example: *‘By listening to and learning from other European projects Opera Domani got new impulses for the programme designed on Don Giovanni’*.

“C” is certain that other influences on their way of working will follow from the research project Opera Domani set up with the *l’Università Bicocca Della Formazione Del Insegnante* (the Bicoca University in Milan in charge of the training of teachers) to evaluate the 10 years of the programme from the teachers’ and the students’ point of view. Additionally Opera Domani sent out a questionnaire to all teachers that took part in the project over the last ten years (part of these results are integrated in this case study). The results of these research projects will be interpreted within the future work of Opera Domani. “C” believes the programme still has the potential to grow. The first ten years showed that a project could bring opera closer to young people, now “C” wants to work more on families.

Oggi vengono le genitori con le bambini, preparate a cantare l’opera insieme. Questa era una cosa particolare perché ho portate vedere l’opera a dei persone che normalmente non andava più. E quindi è un meccanismo

importante di sensibilità (today parents come with their children, ready to sing the opera together. This is a remarkable thing because it brings people to the opera that normally would not come to see an opera anymore. Thus this is an important mechanism to sensitivity).

In this way one would reach a group of people that otherwise would not find the time to go to opera.

But the biggest influence on the work came when As.Li.Co. started to manage the Regional Theatre in Como. From that day onwards the work on accessibility grew wider than the Opera Domani project. It is not only restricted to opera, but involves also theatre, dance and concerts, open to young people and families. In 2006, As.Li.Co. has produced six opera productions. One is the production for Opera Domani, based on a work from the repertoire, but adapted to a young audience and families with children. And two others are also adapted versions of operas from the repertoire, to be played in the smaller historical theatres throughout the region. *Pocket Opera* involves chamber versions of big operas, tailored to the measures of these small theatres that do not have the logistics to stage a full opera. It offers the opportunity to bring the artform to those people that are not able to attend the productions in the bigger houses and thus makes this part of the cultural heritage more accessible to a wider audience.

Changing ideas

On the question of what influenced her ideas “C” answers that the European experience was very important to her. During the RESEO-meetings and joint projects she learned what other colleagues did and how they worked, but realised that it was not simple to implement some of these ways of working in Italy since the structure was very different. The situation in schools is better than it was when she was a child, but the place for music and theatre in schools is still very limited, if she compares it for example with England, where music is more present in schools.

Music teaching at school in Italy is feeble according to “C”, but one has to add that a lot depends on the teachers themselves. If they are willing to work on music or theatre, beautiful things can emerge. *‘There are theatre workshops, and there is the atmosphere to bring children to performances, and/or to take part in the Opera Domani – project, but in general there is not much attention for music and art in schools’*. Art as a discipline is not present and music is only a course of one hour a week in primary and in the first years of secondary school. So, as said a lot depends on the teachers and the institutions themselves’ “C” concludes. This connects/supports the argument of Balestra and Malaguti they talk about the big challenges for institutions working with ‘new’ audiences (2003:28).

What can be learned from this answer is something that could also be noticed in the previous case studies. Although “C” sees it as a change of thinking, it is rather a change in her way of working. “C” wants to bring opera to young people, because her line of thinking very strong and is still the same: she wants to share her passion for this artform with the new generation,

The place of the programme within the opera company

The accessibility programme is an integral part of the company. The educational aspect is at the heart of the company’s mission statement and is shared throughout by the management. As “C” explained earlier, she had the chance to design it and had the possibility to develop it. Opera Domani has developed and runs over the whole of Italy at the moment, but since her task within the company is much wider now (she has been managing director of the Teatro Sociale di Como since 2002) she follows it only from the sideline. The project has become much more stable since As.Li.Co. has been housed at the Teatro Sociale. In Como it is now part of a wider scheme of activities to bring a young audience in to contact with theatre, opera, dance and music. And “C” realises that this strengthened the project. She sees the teachers of Como the whole year round now, to attend with their class a rehearsal or a performance, or to visit the theatre. It has become a more complete programme to

them. In the 2006 season for instance there is a play on Mozart's life and they can attend a performance of Opera Domani's *Don Giovanni*.

The educational work in relation to the wider cultural context

'In Italia ti dirò ci è stato un momento quattro, cinque anni fa in qui sera molto di più. Adesso sono un po' ritornato indietro, per questo crisi economiche (I tell you the last four, five years there were a lot of projects. Today we went one step back because of the economic crisis)'.

Over the last five years more education projects were developed, but now most houses has to move one step back, due to the economic crisis. But not only the economic crisis, also the management crises at the top of several companies had a negative effect on the development of access programmes in Italy. There have been a lot of changes lately. This of course is not ideal for the functioning of a house or company. She adds that those that were doing a lot of good things still continue to do so. She mentions for example, l'Accademia Santa Cecilia in Rome and the Teatro Regio in Torino. La Fenice in Venice sporadically organises educational activities. And others do it by chance, such as the project she saw in Modena. It was a new opera created by a young team and staged by a young stage director. "C" was puzzled though to whether this was an opera for young people. It seemed more an occasion for a young team to stage their work, than acting as a work wanting to engage a young audience into opera. "C" believes that there has to be a connection between what happens on stage and the young audience, instead of just having children/youngsters watching a show they hardly understand. This relates back to her own childhood, where she did not really have positive experiences with the scarce theatre visits she did with school. Therefore she wants to present work adapted to their age range and this is why for instance singing with the artists during the performance is so important to her. It makes the children/youngsters engage in something special. She is convinced that this positive experience might be crucial for future visits.

Future perspectives

At the end of the interview future perspectives were raised. If these perspectives had been outlined six months ago, “C” would have said affirmatively that the Opera Domani would continue to develop further in the region, but today she is much more careful because the current budget cuts have meant that theatres will invest less in education. The funding cuts have put the current Italian opera world in a crisis according to “C”. Some theatres have problems just to provide an artistic programme, thus all additional projects such as education are often cancelled. This is a trend “C” regrets. She would like to prove that if people attend performances when they are young, they are likely to return to the theatre when they are adults. Therefore “C” hopes her Italian colleagues which started over the last four/five years will continue to operate, but all depends on how the political and economic situation develops in the next months/years.

As for the theatre in Como, “C” will continue to develop this branch. To her it remains important to see how the younger audience can be reached. If she had more time the programme would develop more strongly, but for now there are a couple of things she wants to work on. On the one hand there is the work with little children in kindergarten and there are the performances by young artists for children she wants to promote. And on the other hand she wants to develop projects for secondary school children, to evolve what they started this season as an experiment with two operas. Over a period of time the students had the opportunity to meet the stage director, to follow a rehearsal and to attend the performance. Since the Teatro Sociale di Como also programmes symphonic music and theatre “C” hopes one day to design a version of the Opera Domani-programme for classical music, because next to opera that is an artform that according to “C” needs to be brought closer to youngsters. Here she underpins the fact that classical music is not structurally present in compulsory school and therefore distanced from the youngsters’ everyday life (Balestra and Malaguti 2003). When they do not know the art form, it is hard for them to know whether classical music is something that they might/might not

appreciate (Johnson 2002), so an education programme such as Opera Domani could according to “C” make that knowledge gap a little smaller.

III.3.7 Education narrative in context

Again this interview highlights that the opera practitioner’s view is most of all led by personal background and a personal passion, but also by the situation she works from. She grew up in a cultural minded background. Her parents offered her the appetite for a wide range of cultural expressions.

As distinct from her British and French colleague “C” does not have a pedagogical training, but is trained as a cultural manager, which has influence on the way she expresses her beliefs. One notices that her belief is much more directed by the cultural rather than educational concerns. Italy is the country where opera started, and throughout the interview it is clear that she wants to share artistic tradition with young people in a way she never experienced herself. Negative experiences with cultural visits at school seem to have discouraged her from going to a performance if not stimulated by her parents, and to study music during her youth (pp.154-155). This influenced “C”’s strong belief that through her work she wants to give youngsters the chance to take part in a positive arts experience. She is very concerned about the future of this part of Italy’s cultural heritage, in the sense that she does not want new generations of Italians to forget what this heritage is about. This view is rooted in Italian cultural policy; namely the wish to connect with the rich cultural heritage, and to make sure new generations learn to know it, but not just that, also learn to appreciate this heritage that is steeped into Italy’s history as well as the country’s cultural policy (see pp. 134, 138-140; Porter 1995; De Van 2005; Walker 1995).

There had been times that Italians knew the most important arias and tunes by heart and tended to sing them in the streets (Porter 1995), but this has ended. The lyrical aspect of opera was and is still important in Italian opera performances, but “C” noticed that when she started to work in the field of opera, the artform had lost a lot

of its dynamism. The audience attending it was rather old. So she wanted to develop a programme that would bring a new dynamism to the Italian Opera tradition. Although the school situation is better now than it was when “C” was young, the place of music in school is still problematic and depends on the goodwill of the teachers (pp. 158-159). Therefore she and her general manager saw it as part of the company's mission to bring opera to young people. A programme was developed with the use of the voice, language and singing at the centre of the pedagogy, thus relating back to the Italian Opera tradition with the focus on beautiful voices and lyrical arias (Porter 1995; Grout and Palisca 1988).

Though the programme is revised every year, the format has not really altered over time, but its importance for the company and the rest of northern Italy grew a lot since it started in 1996, and became a model for other theatres. From 2002 onwards, more lyrical theatres started to integrate or to see the importance of education activities in their programme (p. 145), following the guidelines of the new legislation stipulating that the lyrical organisations in Italy had to try to reach new audiences (regolamento 47/2002), the reach of the ‘Opera Domani’ increased, partly because the theatres in northern Italy adopted and supported the programme more widely and partly because that year As.Li.Co. got its own theatre. The latter brought more stability to the programme, which offered possibilities to grow. Though educational/outreach work is very vulnerable (it is generally the first activity to go when there are budget cuts), it has a more stable basis at As.Li.Co./Teatro Sociale di Como, since it is supported by the general manager and by person “C” who manages the theatre for As.Li.Co. It remains to be seen what happens when both change jobs.