Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

JUAN SEBASTIAN VASSALLO

BMus (National University of Córdoba, 2013)

“Music Expert-Novice Differences in Speech Perception”

Interdisciplinary Studies

Monday August 12, 2019
9:00 a.m.
Cornett Building
Room A069

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Andrew Schloss, School of Music, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. James Tanaka, Department of Psychology, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

External Examiner:
Dr. Martha McGinnis, Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Myer Horowitz, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

It has been demonstrated that early, formal and extensive musical training induces changes both at the structural and functional levels in the brain. Previous evidence suggests that musicians are particularly skilled in auditory analysis tasks. In this study, I aimed to find evidence that musical training affects the perception of acoustic cues in audiovisual speech processing for Native-English speakers. Using the McGurk paradigm – an experimental procedure based on the perceptual illusion that occurs when an auditory speech message is paired to incongruent visual facial gestures, participants were required to identify the auditory component from an audiovisual speech presentation in four conditions: (1) Congruent auditory and visual modalities, (2) incongruent, (3) auditory only, and (4) visual only. Our data showed no significant differences in accuracy between groups differentiated by musical training. These findings have significant theoretical implications suggesting that auditory cues for speech and music are processed by separable cognitive domains and that musical training might not have a positive effect in speech perception.