



09 May 2013

Letter of recommendation for Dr Ilias Chrissochoidis

I had the good fortune to hire Ilias in 2009/10 as a Research Associate for work on a project I had begun a few years earlier – to explore the possibility of applying methods from the social sciences (specifically tools from game theory) to the understanding of drama, fiction and opera. While I believe that my earlier efforts showed perhaps some promise, it was Ilias who completely transformed the project from, say, an outsider's perspective on the interpretation of opera, to a truly innovative “hardcore” interdisciplinary approach. Ilias has managed to achieve this by not simply adding some musicological thoughts to pre-existing game theoretic analyses but by getting deep into the game theory side itself, challenging and transforming it on the way such that our papers now really present one coherent (yet multifaceted) argument.

I have been working at an interdisciplinary research centre for almost ten years, the ESRC sponsored Centre for Economic Learning and Social Evolution, jointly with mathematicians, anthropologists and psychologists and *never* have I experienced such successful interdisciplinary collaboration where two sides not merely add to each other (or indeed fight with each other) but where something truly uniquely new arises.

Ilias has made this possible as he combines a very sharp mind, outstanding intellectual curiosity, broad learnedness and deep scholarship and wit. Being chair at a department that prides itself to be the finest economics department in Europe and one of the best in the world, I had the privilege to interact with many outstanding scholars over the years, among them a whole set of Nobel laureates in my field. But I do not believe I have met someone quite as scholarly intriguing as Ilias.

That we were able to write two radically original papers (one of which has appeared in the leading opera studies periodical *Cambridge Opera Journal*) in just one year (and a year where I have been exceedingly busy with my chairman duties) I find still baffling. And I would not engage in “tooting my own horn” here would I feel that the key to these papers were to be found in my ideas. Yes, this project probably required a game theorist to be started but what makes it really appealing now is the interdisciplinary *amalgam* that has been entirely Ilias' creation.

In summary, I highly recommend Ilias for research and faculty positions in any academic institution that explores interdisciplinary approaches, and I fully support his effort to secure funding that would allow the resumption of our collaboration this coming year.

Steffen Huck