

FROM THE STUDIO OF TORIN W. CHILES

Western  Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

STUDIO POLICIES, INFORMATION AND COURSE OUTLINE:

- Serious students of the Voice develop not just through disciplined daily practice; they also learn by listening to the masters of their craft AND by reading the important texts of their field. The following selective bibliography is meant to serve as a guide for undergraduate reading. These works contain a general outline of vocal technique and pedagogy; some of them also offer useful repertoire and vocal exercises. For more encyclopaedic pedagogy the following two books have been my cornerstone texts:

Miller, Richard. *The Structure of Singing*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1986. (MT825.M646 1986)

Stark, James. *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. (ML1460.S695 1999)

A Sample Undergraduate Reading List:

Shirlee Emmons and Stanley Sonntag. *The Art of the Song Recital*. New York: Schirmer Books, c1979.

Richard Miller. *On the Art of Singing*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Richard Miller. *Securing Baritone. Bass-Baritone and Bass Voices*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Richard Miller. *Solutions for Singers*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Richard Miller. *Training Soprano Voices*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Richard Miller. *Training Tenor Voices*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Joan Dornemann. *Complete preparation: a guide to auditioning for opera*. New York: Excalibur Pub., c1992.

Anthony Legge. *The art of auditioning: a handbook for singers, accompanists and coaches*. London: Rhinegold, 1988.

Thomas Hemsley. *Singing and imagination: a human approach to a great musical tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Shirlee Emmons. *Power performance for singers: transcending the barriers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Eloise Ristad. *A soprano in her head: right-side-up reflections on life and other performances*. Moab, Utah: Real People Press, c1982.

Lorraine Gorrell. *The nineteenth-century German lied*. Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, c1993.

More advanced students are expected to study some of the works in the studio *Selected Bibliography*. (see <http://publish.uwo.ca/~tchiles/bibliography.html>)

- We are very fortunate to have **Marianna Chibotar** and **Christina Willatt** for our studio's Collaborative Pianists. Ms. Chibotar's cell phone number 519-777-0252 is and her e-mail is mariannachibotar@gmail.com. Ms. Willatt's number is 519-615-0465 and her e-mail is cwillatt@alumni.uwo.ca. Please book their services for the second half of your one-hour lesson (or, for performance majors, for the full hour of your repertoire lessons), at *least* a half-hour rehearsal/coaching through the week (more, ideally, for performance majors and grad students) **and** for all your juries and recitals etc. Ms. Chibotar and Ms. Willatt are talented and experienced coaches, accompanists and *répétiteurs*. You will want to prepare your repertoire and diction with them and work with them as extensively as is financially feasible. Please note that the practice at Western is that **you are responsible for all financial arrangements and commitments with pianists throughout the year**.
- **My telephone number here in London is: 519-615-8258**. Please do not call after 9:30pm. ***I generally require at least 24 hours notice to re-schedule a lesson***. If you wake up in the morning and find that you are "under the weather" vocally, please call my cell phone number at 8:30am or call the studio phone through the day at the bottom of an hour to let me know and to reschedule the lesson. **The studio phone number is 661-2111 ex84323**. My e-mail address is tchiles@uwo.ca I will do my best to make up lessons through each term, but my hourly schedule through the week is densely packed, and therefore lessons may have to be rescheduled to the end of the terms. Please ask to rebook missed lessons; they will be happily rescheduled up to the end of April.

**"No shows" are inconsiderate and unprofessional and they may not be re-scheduled.
Please note that the "professional hour" shall be construed as fifty minutes.**

- Please monitor the Studio Bulletin Board (the door of MB313) for announcements. I will certainly email as well – please ensure I have your address. We have a Studio Facebook page again this year. This is a good forum for announcements and swapping lesson times and asking questions of your more experienced colleagues.
- We will have two Studio Recitals this year. Our first Studio Recital (**Wednesday Dec. 8th, 6pm in VKH**) will celebrate the rich vein of music from ***Tin Pan Alley***. Find a wonderful song from this wonderful era and genre – there will be a bit of movement and spoken lines involved! The second Studio Recital (**Tuesday Feb. 9th, 6pm in VKH**) will feature art songs that you have had written for you by a composer at Western. Find a text and a composer NOW and start crafting a gem that’s tailor-made for YOU!

Please take careful note of the dates and invite your family and friends to these concerts — our studio has earned an exciting reputation for these shows!

- **I have booked TC100 on Fridays from 2:30pm-5:30pm for our regular Performance Class.** This class commences on September 17th and we will begin the year once again by each singer presenting a “party piece” so that we all get to meet each other vocally. I will then move into a phase where I “teach” in a Masterclass setting as the year begins. This will soon change into more “Performance Class” opportunities as the year unfolds. This lets each of you perform once a week if you choose, but certainly ***no less than once every two weeks***. It gives you a safe environment to have a first real performance of your Jury and Recital and Audition repertoire. *Please ensure that you sing at least one half of the total number of performance classes this year – this is the expectation for the course.*

The pleasure of your company is mandatory for the full duration of our studio Performance Class each week — even if you are not performing for the class that week.

- Performance Class (‘masterclass’) and Class Recital time slots should be treated as lesson times with regard to your responsibilities and cancellation procedures. You are welcome to invite guests and your colleagues from other studios to studio Performance Classes (and, indeed to any lesson). **I would also encourage you to attend the masterclasses of each of the other studios.**
- Supplying your colleagues with photocopies of the text and translations of pieces that you sing for our studio Performance Class will enhance your performance for both yourself and your audience. Similarly, I expect you to prepare and present a PowerPoint Slideshow of translations and complimentary art to accompany your credit recitals but NOT your juries.
- **Away Dates and Credit Recital Booking:** I will NOT be away at inconvenient times this year, BUT please do not book recitals or dress rehearsals on Thursday evenings or on Sundays. Please note also that I will be hearing many UG auditions on Saturdays, so, no Saturday recital bookings before the 4pm slot. Please coordinate booking recital dates closely with your pianists and with me – it’s complex! There is a Webpage outlining our [Recital Procedure](#) and the various deadlines as well as [Jury Requirements](#).

- For each piece of repertoire that you bring to a lesson with me, I expect you to have completed (before we work on the piece) a translation which includes an attempt at an IPA (or phonetic) rendering of the text, a word-for-word decryption and then a “poetic translation” underneath the original text. Here is a one-line example:

dove ma:j kwestamor dove spinzemi il pjanto su:o

Dove mai quest'amor, dove spinsemi il pianto suo?

Where ever this-love where drove-me the weeping her?

To what has my love and her weeping driven me?

- Students are encouraged to study the **International Phonetic Alphabet [IPA]**. There is rudimentary information (in the form of concise charts) in the appendices of all the Richard Miller book (above) but I also strongly recommend:

Wall, Joan. *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers*. Greenbank, Wahington: Pacific Isle Publishing, 2005. (MT883.W35 1989)

Moriarty, John. *Diction*. Boston: E.C. Schirmer Music Co., 1975. (MT872.M67)

Jensen, Karen. *Singer's Guide to the IPA [interactive multimedia]: A multimedia course in the international phonetic alphabet*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba. School of Music, [1998?] (MT883.S554 1998)

You can get your own copy of this excellent resource from:

Karen Jensen c/o

School of Music, University of Manitoba,

Winnipeg, MB

R3T 2N2

Kjensen@cc.UManitoba.ca

- It is a valuable pedagogical tool to make a **recording of each lesson**. Please do a full debriefing of these recordings after each lesson. It may be very useful to make notes as you study these recordings. I have a static web cam set up, but honestly phones make excellent recordings these days!
- Please ensure that you are dressed appropriately for our lessons**. You should be in clothing that allows free movement for stretching and bending but which is not so baggy that I can not monitor your breathing and alignment effectively. I may often be staring at your abdomen to monitor your Breath Management; please wear a top that will allow you to sing comfortably under this focused attention. Your footwear should also be sensibly chosen to facilitate healthy alignment and groundedness.
- ~~In addition to the new MPS Recital Card which requires each voice student to attend 12 Voice Recitals and have their card signed by a faculty member (NOT required this year), each member of this studio is also required to submit a written review of six recitals throughout the year.~~ These reviews must be about 250 words in length and should discuss the merits of the voices, pedagogical and performance practice issues, the repertoire and the overall presentation. I would be pleased if at least one of these six reviews discussed a performance from the wider artistic community of London.
- I recommend that everyone keep a Singing Journal**. Use the journal to keep track of the vocalises that you use as you practise. Use it to jot down any observations or questions that may arise as you practise or even as you observe other singers or listen to recordings.

- **Examination material (Jury Repertoire) must be solidly memorised by the middle of February.** The sooner this material is learned and memorised the sooner we can work at polishing it and the more comfortable you will be during the exam period. *Try to get into a rhythm of learning a piece, coaching it and then performing it in our Performance Class on a two week cycle.*
- **Students are expected to be “off book” for all repertoire sessions with me** and, ideally, for repertoire sessions with Ms. Chibotar and Ms. Willatt. The music and words must be firmly in your mouth and in your mind to facilitate meaningful coaching at the university level. Repertoire that you perform for Masterclasses, Performance Classes and Class Recitals must, of course, be solidly memorised.

Grading:

Please read very carefully the **Voice Jury/Recital Requirements** document, the **Department of Performance Studies Handbook** as well as the **Recital Procedure Page**. These documents outline what the Faculty of Music requires of you. These documents are found online:

<https://music.uwo.ca/departments/music-performance/juryRequirements/VOICE%20jury%20requirements.pdf>

and

<http://www.music.uwo.ca/departments/music-performance/handbook/credit-recitals.html>

and

<http://www.music.uwo.ca/departments/music-performance/handbook/index.html>

- **I would like each student presenting a credit recital to have performed the recital in public *before* its presentation for grading.** Hometown libraries, churches and concert associations are very appreciative of these concerts and *YOU* will benefit greatly from the “dry run”.
- Your Undergraduate Applied Music grade will be calculated in the following manner:
 - 60% - Studio Work (lessons and the requirements outlined in this document.)
 - 5% - Recital Cards and Reviews
 - 25% - Jury (3rd and 4th year Performance is 20% Jury and 65% Studio)
 - 10% - Performance Class and Class Recital participation
- Graduate Students:
 - 80% Studio Work
 - 15% Performance Class
 - 5% Recital Cards and Reviews

- Here is a guide to the MINIMUM expectations regarding Undergraduate repertoire:

Performance Program:

First Year – 16 songs fully prepared and memorised
 Second Year – 20 songs
 Third Year – Short Recital plus 8 songs
 Fourth Year – Full Recital plus 18 songs

Non-Performance Programs:

First Year – 12 songs fully prepared and memorised
 Second Year – 16 songs
 Third Year – 18 songs
 Fourth Year – 20 songs

Graduate Program:

First Year – Recital plus 12 songs and involvement with UWOpera
 Second Year – Recital plus 12 songs, audition arias and involvement with UWOpera

Please also take particular note of the accompanying Voice Division document that is rubric given to the faculty members who assess your jury and recital performances.
Note the criteria by which you will be evaluated.

- Repertoire should be chosen from various periods and styles and must include at least the four languages this faculty requires (English, German French and Italian). Please note that these are the **MINIMUM** requirements and that aspiring *performers* may strive to exceed this guideline. *Singers beginning studies with me must begin the year with Italian baroque repertoire – It's how I hear a voice and work on technique!*
- It may occasionally be necessary for me to re-schedule our regular lesson times. I will contact you personally should this happen, and we will find a mutually acceptable time to reschedule. **Please ensure that I have your most up-to-date telephone number, e-mail and other contact information.** Please check for e-mail from me and keep your UWO email inbox clear to receive email!
- Please take careful and frequent note of the instructions and notices posted along with the schedule on the bulletin board beside our studio door (MB313) and on our studio FB page. Please feel free to knock on the studio door to ask a question, to get some advice or just to chat; I know that you will be respectful both of your colleagues' and of my private clients' lesson times.



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Important Information From Western University

Grading scale for all aspects of the course is A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

The presentation of curricular materials in this class may occasionally deviate from the presentation in the required textbook. In such cases the material provided in the lectures and/or the notes posted on OWL always supersedes the presentation in the textbook and should therefore be treated as the definitive representation of that topic.

Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. In order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing more than 30% of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation in the form of a completed and appropriately signed Student Medical Certificate (SMC) indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities, or the equivalent documentation for non-medical or compassionate grounds. Students seeking academic consideration must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence. Documentation, if required, shall be submitted to the Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210). Note that the new Self-Reporting Absence Portal may not be used for requesting academic relief for work worth more than 30%, or for Final Exams scheduled during the official examination period. Students are directed to read the full Senate policy on accommodation for medical illness at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf

A pdf copy of a Senate approved Student Medical Certificate (SMC) may be downloaded here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

In cases where students miss work that is worth 30% or less of the total course grade due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if an online absence report is submitted using the new Self-Reporting Absence Portal, or if documentation is voluntarily submitted to the Associate Dean's office and the Associate Dean deems that accommodation is warranted, then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(zes) may be discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course. If documentation is not submitted voluntarily then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(zes) will receive a grade of zero.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western at the following website https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Students may be excused to observe a religious holy day of their faith without penalty provided they notify the instructor in advance. Students are responsible for material covered in their absence and each student shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.

If you require academic accommodations because of a disability, please let the instructor know during the first week of classes, and, if you have not done so already, register as soon as possible with Accessible Education (formerly known as Services for Students with Disabilities). You can learn more about the Student Success Centre's services for accessible education at <http://success.uwo.ca/academics/sas/index.html>.

Hand in assignments to the instructor at the beginning of class on the day for which the assignment is due. Never leave completed assignments in the faculty mailboxes in the main office nor slide them under the instructor's door. Acceptance of late assignments will be at the discretion of the instructor and only if extenuating circumstances prevail; otherwise, late assignments will NOT be graded!

Complete assignments neatly using appropriate word processing and/or music notation software. In some cases, musical examples may be annotated neatly in pencil on proper manuscript paper — sloppy assignments will NOT be graded!

Plagiarism: Complete assignments independently. Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

General Philosophy and Advice...

- You will be your own best teacher throughout your life. I want to teach you how to teach yourself! You will, of course, always need professional “ears” to help you and guide you but you are the master of your vocal destiny.
- I generally spend the first half of the lesson working on purely technical aspects of your voice. This is where we will explore and develop your voice and where you will begin to learn how to teach yourself. In the second half of the lesson we will apply those technical concepts to the repertoire. You will want to have your accompanist with you for the second half of your lesson.
- Practise! Our art is all about muscular co-ordination and development. Singers may not be able, physically, to practice on their instrument for 6 hours a day as a pianist or violinist might but we can “practise” through various important preparatory activities, such as: study of the text and translation, listening to recordings, reading secondary material, repertoire search, keyboard practice... (NB: The ability to play the piano is an invaluable asset as you search for repertoire and as you learn your music!)
- Use the library well. Listen to recordings to seek out repertoire, to learn a sense of idiomatic style and performance practice. It is our intellect and preparation that transforms what we do from craft into art.
- Preparing repertoire at the university level should be challenging! You will need a personal translation (literal, poetic and IPA). You need to memorize the poem, then the music. You need to coach your repertoire then you need to perform it, put it away and then finally bring it out again for presentation — thus, the advantage of choosing and learning your repertoire very early in the year.
- Repertoire — I could just assign repertoire to each student, but the search for and the choosing of repertoire is an incredibly important part of what you need to learn here. So, I would like you to bring repertoire choices to me. I am happy to offer advice but that is all. You have many excellent resources to aid you in your quest: anthologies and collections, books in the library that outline repertoire for various voice types at various stages of vocal development, Lisa Philpot, vocal coaches, recordings of recitals by singers whom you respect, recitals by colleagues...

“Contrary to what you might believe, merely doing your job every day doesn’t qualify as real practice. Going to meetings isn’t practicing your people skills, and replying to email isn’t practicing your typing. You have to set aside some time and do focused practice in order to get better at something.”

– Steve Yegge



The Singers’ *Kata*

1. Talk to other singers. Listen to performances and recordings. This is more important than any book or training course.
2. Sing! The best kind of learning is learning by doing.
3. Take singing lessons from a challenging teacher.
4. Seek out and work on projects with good singers and players. Find out what it means to be the best.
5. Work on pieces that have been recorded by great singers. Learn how they accomplished what they did. Learn how to perform so other people can understand and follow your artistic ideas.
6. Sing in different styles and languages. Pick genres that have aesthetics and conventions that are unlike what you are used to.
7. Understand how your body affects what you do. Know how long it takes your voice to warm up; how long you need to recover from a hard day or week of singing; how long you can sing day after day without extra rest; and how long it takes to recover from illness.

GUIDELINES FOR JURORS MARKING UNDERGRADUATE VOICE
RECITALS AND JURY EXAMINATIONS

- **90-100%** Marks at the A+ level reflect performances that demonstrate highly advanced, technically solid, artistic, expressive singing with a consistent and thorough understanding of the text and music and superb performance skills. These marks should be rare and are indicated when the performance ceases to be heard as an exam. Reserve this for outstanding performances.

- **85-88%** (NB avoid 89%) reflects a performance of considerable polish, with secure technique and intonation, expressive singing, thoughtful understanding of the text and music and excellent performing skills.

- **80-84%** represents a performance which is well prepared, delivered with confidence and generally successful technique. Performances at this level should demonstrate a good understanding of the text and music with some evidence of flair and imagination.

- **73-78%** (NB avoid 79%) Marks in this range represent a good, well prepared performance delivered with a certain degree of assurance and some understanding of the text and music. Technique in this range may be successful but not yet consistent.

- **65-72%** Marks in this range are used for performances that fulfill the requirements but which do not demonstrate successful technical development. Understanding of text and musical ideas may be immature at this level and only limited performance skills may be demonstrated.

- Marks below **64%** are used for performances that show limited awareness of voice study and performance skills. Performances in this range may be full of mistakes and not solidly prepared. The connection to text and understanding of musical elements are rudimentary.