

## VOICE DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK

### Carnegie Mellon University, College of Fine Arts

Welcome to Carnegie Mellon! We, your faculty, are so pleased to have such fine singers enroll at our school each year, and we expect you all to make strong musical and academic progress through the course of your studies with us. The School of Music seeks to graduate every student accepted into its program, therefore, much care is given to the selection process. Many of our alumni of the School of Music are currently performing with orchestras and opera companies around the world, as well as performing on Broadway. We pride ourselves on preparing each of our students for professional careers in opera and the concert stage.

This handbook has been created specifically for the students within our prestigious voice department, to help answer questions regarding departmental policies, juries, recitals, coachings, and more. Remember, you're responsible for knowing what's in this handbook and using what applies to you. Revisions made during the academic year will be implemented by updating the web version of this document at [Voice Department Policies - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](#) Meanwhile, please keep abreast of the goings on within the voice department and the School of Music at large by:

- Reading your email. Each week, you will receive a departmental email with news about upcoming events, auditions, seminars, and all things 'vocal.'
- For more information on Production check out [Opera - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](#) It is here that you have access to the year's master calendar of all things related to opera production, scenes production and/or choir.
- Checking the mailboxes. Here is a great place to leave music for your pianists, paperwork for your teachers and vice versa, etc...
- Reading University Publications and checking the Voice Bulletin Board (located outside CFA 155), and Message Board (across from CFA 105)

And now, without further ado, here is your Voice Department Faculty:

**Jennifer Aylmer**, Associate Professor of Voice, soprano

**Mark Carver**, Associate Teaching Professor of Collaborative Piano

**Marianne Cornetti**, Artist Lecturer in Voice, mezzo soprano

**Thomas Douglas**, Director of Choral Activities, Director of Opera Studies

**Dr. Jocelyn Dueck**, Assistant Professor in Vocal Coaching and Collaborative Piano

**Sari Gruber**, Artist Lecturer in Voice, soprano

**Roseanna Irwin**, Associate Teaching Professor of Vocal Coaching and Accompanying

**Ellen Rissinger**, Special Faculty in Vocal Coaching and Accompanying

**Maria Spacagna**, Associate Professor of Voice, soprano

**Daniel Teadt**, Assistant Teaching Professor, baritone

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## LESSONS

Voice majors attend 50-minute lessons per week during the school year. Lessons are generally structured in two parts: the first 30 minutes are with your studio instructor alone, and then a pianist joins you for the last 20 minutes of your lesson, facilitating work on repertoire. Lessons are accompanied by collaborative student pianists and faculty.

Students in the BXA programs are required to register for FOUR semesters of voice lessons with a Major Voice Teacher at the CFA. Because of the unique nature of the program, this typically means that BXA students take lessons and coachings during their 1<sup>st</sup> and Sophomore years. BXA students are not entitled to continue lessons and coachings after they have satisfied their four-semester requirements. Those BXA students wishing to continue their vocal studies should consult with the extension division and their advisors at the BXA.

### Private Studio Attendance

Studio attendance is required, and any unexpected absence leaves the professor with a wasted hour. It is NEVER acceptable to miss a lesson without contacting the professor as far in advance as possible. Emergencies will be understood only when they are clearly emergencies.

Unexcused absences are lost opportunities and need not be rescheduled by the teachers; such absences will adversely affect the students' grades.

### Change of studio teacher

The relationship between you and your studio teacher is crucial. Ordinarily, the teacher and student will work together throughout the student's residence in the School of Music.

On the rare occasion when a student wishes to make a change in studio, the student must receive the permission of your current studio teacher, your proposed new studio teacher, and the School Head, in this order. Before formally requesting a change in studio, students must first discuss their concerns with their present studio teacher. Failure to do so may jeopardize the student's request for a studio change. The order of following procedure MUST be adhered to (each step below must be completed by a signature obtained above before the next step in the process):

- a. Discuss your request with the School Head or the Director of Student Services if the change will be between school years. Requests for change between the semesters of a school year, especially during the freshman school year, may only be approved on the basis of individual emergency circumstances.
- b. Discuss your request with your present studio teacher.
- c. Fill out a Studio Preference Form and turn it into the department Chair or Director of Recruitment in admissions (up to 3 preferences). Requests will be processed after May 1 (if the change be between school years)
- d. Submit this petition to the School Head

A request for change of studio teacher for the following fall semester is finalized after the end of the preceding spring semester; it may not be possible to honor a request which is submitted later than May.

\*Space **MUST** be available on the proposed new studio teacher's roster in order to be granted a place in that studio. Therefore, it is recommended that all students petitioning to change studios **ALSO** fill out a "Studio Preference Form" located in Sharon Johnson's office.

**NOTE:**

In this business, it is considered unethical to study voice with more than one teacher concurrently. During the academic year, it is important for singers to build a technical foundation and not have 'too many cooks in the kitchen.' We faculty will not proselytize to students from other studios, and voice students **MUST NOT** approach other teachers for sample lessons, regardless of the circumstance.

Additionally, students **MUST NOT** approach a prospective teacher regarding possible studio availability.

## **SEMINAR**

Voice Studio Performance Class (“Seminar”) is considered an integral part of your vocal development, and an opportunity to showcase your talents in front of your colleagues and peers. Although this class is not taken for credit, it is required of all undergraduate and graduate voice performance majors, BXA students, and those graduate students with a concentration in voice. Seminar is a hybrid type of class, where performance meets master class (via written critique by the voice faculty). Those in the audience are expected to behave in a supportive and respectful manner, in a sense, practicing acceptable concert etiquette. Our Vocal Seminars are open to any invited music majors, visiting parents/students, teachers and friends.

Singers are required to fill out 7 forms (one per voice faculty- you may find them on the Mezzanine level, just outside room 155). We record each seminar for your personal use, so appropriate concert attire is REQUIRED:

### Dresses and Skirts:

Dresses and skirts must be below, not above, the knee. Why? You are singing on a raised stage, knees being eye-level with your audience. Doing a simple turn on stage in a mini-skirt could result in disaster. In other words, what you see in the mirror is very different than what an audience sees: they are looking UP. Necklines should be considered as well. Choose a neckline that is flattering, but not distracting.

### Suit or no suit:

In performance, you will never go wrong wearing a tailored suit. These days, auditions are a bit more relaxed and singers may opt to wear a pants + dress shirt/sweater or skirt + dress shirt/sweater combination in lieu of a suit. Keep in mind:

1. If we as your audience can see your belt loops (i.e. wearing a dress shirt without a jacket, or wearing a sports coat open) you MUST wear a belt.
2. If you ask yourself “Should I iron these pants before walking on stage?” Then the answer is YES. Always be mindful of ironing, fit, and length of dress pants.
3. Jeans/shorts/athletic wear are NOT permitted!

Consider avoiding evening wear during a day-time seminar, and stiletto-heeled shoes (purely for posture-related issues pertaining to singing). If you have a question as to whether or not your outfit is appropriate for seminar, it probably isn’t.

### ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

You may not have more than one absence in seminar, however: if you are absent more than once, you will need a medical excuse. Two late-arrivals equal one absence, so be mindful of your time.

If you are ill and unable to sing, you must give at least 24 hours’ notice. If you don’t give 24 hours’ notice, and you don’t have a medical excuse, you cannot pass Voice seminar.

## COACHING

At Carnegie Mellon, singers are given the unique privilege to coach with faculty pianists on a weekly basis. Undergraduates receive 25-minute coachings, while graduate and ASM students receive 50-minute coachings weekly. It is the students' responsibility to provide music for each of their assigned pianists.

Working with a coach differs slightly from working with a voice teacher but is no less important! Your voice teacher, especially during your formative years, is primarily concerned with vocal health, appropriate repertoire assignment, and other technical aspects of your instrument. While coaching does not address technical matters of voice production, it DOES touch on diction, performance practice and style, rhythm, interpretation, and deeper understanding of the poetry you are singing, and more!

Before you go to your coaching, it is expected that students will have already learned their notes and rhythms in the PRACTICE ROOM. A coach may point out discrepancies in intonation, or rhythmic mistakes, but it is not the job of a coach to:

- Teach singers a piece of music from scratch. A singer may need help in the beginning stages of a song or aria, simply by being able to hear the accompaniment played, however: it is expected of all voice majors that after an initial coaching on a song or aria, that they will practice it on their own before taking it back to the coach the following week.
- Record the accompaniment, or solo vocal line, of any given piece of music. Students are encouraged to record any or all complete coaching sessions, but a coach is not a karaoke machine, and should not be treated as such.

Please note: **Coaches can dismiss students from a coachings if students consistently come to their coachings ill-prepared. Grades in coaching will directly reflect the level of preparation students bring to their coaching.** (Please see "Production" for more information regarding coaching)

### ASSIGNMENT:

Just like the studio teacher-student relationship, the relationship between coach and singer is of utmost importance. Voice majors are carefully matched with faculty pianists based on what we feel would best benefit the student's temperament, skill level, and musical compatibility. This pairing is decided at the end of the spring semester, by your voice faculty (by both teachers and faculty pianists, alike)

### RECORDINGS:

The CFA is equipped with a state-of-the-art recording facility, and students are encouraged to take advantage! Please see: [Recording Services - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](https://www.cmu.edu/music/recording-services/) Faculty pianists may be hired to play for recording sessions at \$75 per recording session. Because a booked session is typically 2 hours in length, students may want to double up with the same pianist, to save some money and rehearsal time.

## OPERA PRODUCTION

Carnegie Mellon stands apart from most American universities in many ways, but especially regarding the performance opportunities afforded to our voice students: we produce two to three fully staged, orchestra-accompanied productions per year, all cast from within the singers at the CFA. Undergraduates are required to take 24 units of production, while graduate students are required to register for 12 units of "Performance Electives" which may include "Production".

### CASTING:

To be cast in the School of Music Productions, singers must be Voice Major students in good standing, actively studying with a Major Voice Teacher at the CFA, and currently working with a faculty coach within the School of Music. BXA students *may* be considered for roles in productions, but only if they meet the same criteria as voice majors: actively studying with a Major Voice teacher at the CFA and registered in the studio of a faculty collaborative pianist. The casting of a BXA student in a named role may only be allowed if it will not deprive a voice major of the opportunity to be cast. Students who are enrolled in the BXA program may also participate in Production with special permission in a "non-role" capacity (stage management, crew, chorus, etc...)

### MUSICAL PREPARATION FOR OPERA:

In the two weeks prior to any given opera production, students are either assigned individual/ensemble coaching time, or are required to sign up for coachings on their respective roles in the productions. Production rehearsals are built into the master calendar for the year and can be viewed at [Opera - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](http://Opera - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University (cmu.edu))

Voice parts must be fully learned when coaching begins. This means that you can sing your vocal line, know all piano interludes as well, without any assistance. Additionally, students must be fully off book by the first music run-through. If the opera coach makes the determination that the student is not adequately prepared, they have the right to stop the coaching and make further recommendations to the voice faculty. **Lack of preparation at any time during the coaching process may result in dismissal from the cast, and all credits for Production forfeit.**

### ABSENCES

Any absence during Opera Production MUST be pre-approved by the Director of Opera Studies, Stage Manager, and private voice instructor. Students may find the "Excused Absence Petition" on page 23 of this Handbook, or in Sharon Johnston's office. Asking for a release via email, or by casually stopping a faculty member in the hallway is NOT acceptable.

Instances that would require an Excused Absence Petition include Graduate School Auditions, Professional Gigs (with pre-approval of the faculty), Illness, family emergency, etc...

### PRODUCTION CONTENT

In this business, it is not uncommon to encounter sexually and/or politically provocative content within libretti or in the staging of certain productions. For this reason, the voice department has a required Audition Form for all singers, which assists us in knowing how we

can best accommodate students wishing to abstain from using certain language, wearing immodest costume, or participating in provocative staging. Additionally, the voice department has recently appointed a “Sensitive Content Person”; a voice faculty member who is available to those students needing an additional perspective in opera rehearsals.\* The job of the SCP is to give students a sympathetic ear, some professional perspective, and of course, support and encouragement. If student discomfort is the result of harassment, assault, or other illegal activity, the university’s Title IX Office must be contacted immediately.

Taken from [www.cmu.edu/title-ix/](http://www.cmu.edu/title-ix/):

“The Office of Title IX Initiatives is dedicated to promoting gender equality at Carnegie Mellon University, which included coordinating the University’s efforts to prevent and effectively respond to all forms of gender discrimination (including gender identity discrimination) and sexual misconduct impacting community members, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, and stalking”

\*The appointed SCP for each production will be announced prior to rehearsals

## **Discriminatory Harassment**

(Taken from CMU’s “The Word”: [The Word: Student Handbook - The Word - Student Handbook - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](#))

“Carnegie Mellon is firmly committed to intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and expression, and respect for the dignity of each individual. Acts of discriminatory harassment or intimidation by a student directed toward any member of the community are inconsistent with this commitment and will not be tolerated. Consistent with the University’s Statement of Assurance, prohibited acts include harassment and intimidation motivated by discriminatory intent based on race, color, national origin, birth sex, gender identity, handicap or disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Any such harassment or intimidation of or by a student should be referred to the dean of students or designee for resolution.”

## **Accommodations**

If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, we faculty will work with you to ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, please contact them at [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu)

Please note that accommodations do not carry over from one semester to the next.



## Student Wellness

It is more important than ever before, to take care of yourself. Forgive yourself when things do not go well and try your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax. Not only will this help you to be a better singer and musician but adopting these behaviors will help you cope with stress.

There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to navigate our website for valuable information. We are here to assist you in any way we can.

*If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call someone immediately, day or night:*

*Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS): [412-268-2922](tel:412-268-2922) and <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>.*

*Re:solve Crisis Network: [888-796-8226](tel:888-796-8226)*

*If the situation is life threatening, call the police*

*On campus: CMU Police: [412-268-2323](tel:412-268-2323)*

*Off campus: 911*

## GUIDELINES FOR VOICE FACULTY

### MISSED LESSONS:

Any lessons canceled by the teacher for any reason will be made up. However, it is important to note that teachers are NOT required to make up lessons missed because of student illness or other absence. Missed lessons due to extra choir rehearsals will be made up. Make-up lessons due to teacher absence must be scheduled in a way that fits the student's schedule and does not penalize the student academically or financially.

Faculty who must be absent from lessons for a week or more are required to notify the department chair or school head, and make necessary arrangements to reschedule missed lessons, either before or after the anticipated absence. Teachers and students may opt to utilize zoom for lessons, but only if the teacher's absence is extensive (due to illness, out of town gig, etc..), and only if permission to do so is granted by the School Head. Online lessons are ONLY to be used in this type of emergency circumstance, and may only be given if the student involved, agrees.

### REQUIRED ATTENDANCE:

All teachers must be present for their students' required recitals, seminar performances, and end-of-semester juries of their students.

## **VOICE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS: Seminar, Juries, Recitals**

### **First Year Voice Majors:**

The principle emphasis is on basic vocal technique and the sung Italian and English languages. Repertoire is selected by the studio teacher, and the assignment of operatic arias will be limited during the Freshmen year.

#### Minimum Requirements:

SIX memorized and performance-ready selections per semester: three selections to be performed in seminar, and three selections to be presented at Juries. Songs/Arias sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at the Jury without special permission from the studio teacher.

### **Sophomore Voice Majors:**

Study of a second foreign language, German, is added. Principle emphasis during Sophomore year will be on German repertoire (Lieder), and the continued study of the Italian and English repertoire.

#### Minimum Requirements, FALL semester:

EIGHT memorized and performance-ready selections: three selections to be performed in seminar, and five selections to be presented at Fall Juries. Songs/Arias sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at the Jury without special permission from the studio teacher.

#### Minimum Requirements, SPRING semester:

NINE memorized and performance-ready selections: three selections to be performed in seminar, and six selections to be presented at SOPHOMORE REVIEW. Songs/Arias sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at Sophomore Review without special permission from the studio teacher.

Please see separate "SOPHOMORE REVIEW GUIDELINES" page for repertoire, and other requirements.

### **Junior Voice Majors:**

Study of a third foreign language, French, is added. Principle emphasis during the Junior year will be on the French repertoire (Chansons, Mélodies), the continued study of the Italian, German and English repertoire, and a new focus on operatic arias to be assigned at the discretion of the studio teacher.

#### Required Elements during Junior Year:

EIGHT memorized and performance-ready selections per semester: three selections to be performed in seminar, and five songs to be presented at Juries. Songs/Arias sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at the Jury without special permission from the studio teacher.

#### Junior Recital:

Junior voice majors will sing a solo recital with a duration of 25-30 minutes (musical timings, not including pausing in between sets), focusing on English and at least two of the following languages: Italian, German, or French. Recital repertoire should reflect the course of study to date, and may include Baroque, Classical, 18-20<sup>th</sup> century through contemporary composers (repertoire written after 1975). Standard operatic arias and musical theater selections are not considered acceptable recital repertoire at this juncture.

Recital repertoire may be offered in seminar or during juries, however: additional repertoire, at the discretion of the studio teacher, is encouraged for voice seminar, juries, and practice within studio.

- Students are encouraged, whenever possible, to present joint-recitals in groups of two or three. Because Junior recitals are only 25-30 minutes long, and are presented jointly, encores are discouraged.
- If the student has met the minimum time requirements stated above for the recital, the remaining available time may be used to sing repertoire of other styles and genres, with the approval of the studio teacher.
- It is understood that, with the exception of chamber music requiring more than one accompanying instrument, the recital will be performed from memory.

#### **Senior Voice Majors:**

Seniors will continue to add repertoire in all four languages, and will also be actively preparing repertoire for graduate school auditions, if the studio teacher feels this is the appropriate path for their individual students.

#### Required elements during Senior year:

Minimum requirements:

EIGHT memorized and performance-ready selections per semester: three selections to be performed in seminar, and five songs to be presented at Juries. Songs/Arias sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at the Jury without special permission from the studio teacher.

#### Senior Recital:

Senior voice majors will also sing a solo recital with a duration of 50 minutes (musical timings, not including pausing in between sets), focusing on English, Italian, German and French. This repertoire will be chosen in conjunction with the studio teacher. If the student has met the minimum time/language required elements stated above, the remaining available time may be used to sing repertoire of other styles and genres, with the approval of the studio teacher. It is understood that, with the exception of chamber music requiring more than one accompanying instrument, the recital will be performed from memory.

- A 10-12 minute intermission is encouraged for Senior recitals
- The studio teacher retains the right to veto any repertoire deemed inappropriate for individual students (whether based on pedagogical reasons, content, or other)
- In the case of student composers, the completed work must be submitted at least 6 weeks before the recital date
- If a student wishes to petition for exception to any of the above, a written letter must be submitted to the studio teacher 6 weeks before the scheduled recital, and must be approved by the studio teacher and the School Head.

### **Graduate Voice Majors:**

The primary goals for graduate voice majors are: to advance their technical understanding of their instruments, to delve deeper into both song and operatic repertoire, to build vocal stamina, confidence and the vocal preparedness for entering the highly competitive music world, as a young artist.

#### Minimum Requirements:

Several memorized and performance-ready selections per semester: three selections to be performed in Seminar/Studio Class, and other teacher-approved selections to be presented at Juries. \*Jury repertoire must consist of **at least four selections**, totaling at least **15 minutes** of total music. Your jury package must include one aria from an oratorio, and may include one aria from an opera. A singer should include more than four selections on their jury if the timing of the combined jury program is less than 15 minutes, or if the singer wishes to include additional material. Songs sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at the Jury without special permission from the studio teacher. No jury is given during the semester of the required graduate voice recital. Recital repertoire may be offered in seminar or during juries, however: additional repertoire, at the discretion of the studio teacher, is encouraged for voice seminar, juries, and practice within the studio.

*\*changes in jury requirement effective as of September 2022*

#### Graduate Voice Recital (Required):

Graduate voice majors must sing a solo recital with at least 50 minutes of music (musical timings, not including pauses in between sets), focusing on repertoire chosen in conjunction with the studio teacher and may include Italian, German, French, English, and/or other foreign languages. Depending on the focus of the program, fewer languages may be considered appropriate (if for example, half the program were dedicated to an extended song cycle or opus). With the exception of chamber music, which requires more than one accompanying instrument, the recital must be performed from memory.

Comprehensive Review is tied to the students' lecture recital and must be submitted in order to graduate. Students may find more information regarding the required elements at:

<http://music.cmu.edu/pages/insidemusic-graduate-curricula-and-information>

Excerpts from students' comprehensive review may be included as program notes for the lecture recital.

#### Additional Requirements in Performance:

Voice graduate students at CMU are required to take "Performance" (18 units), and by definition, include performances where you are appearing in a public performance as "soloist." These opportunities may be a CMU-sponsored event (as winner of the Concerto Competition, or soloist in a CMU choir oratorio, etc...), your required Lecture-Recital or other recital, or other professional organization (Pittsburgh Opera, etc...).

"Performance" units are separate from your "Performance Electives" (12 units) which encompass performances in CMU-productions, Opera Workshop/Scenes (Spring), or other independently produced performance, taking place with under the supervision of a studio teacher, acting teacher, or other faculty advisor.

For additional required elements of your Master's Degree, including information on \*Outreach Performances, please visit [Current Students - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](http://www.cmu.edu/music/current-students) and speak with your graduate advisor, namely, Stephen Neeley.

#### **Recital Procedures:**

In lieu of pre-recital hearing, quorum of two voice faculty members, comprised of the studio teacher and one additional faculty member, must be present at all degree recitals. The quorum will adjudicate as to whether the student has satisfactorily fulfilled the requirements for the degree recital. Only the studio teacher may enter the final grade for "Recital."

- If a student fails their degree recital, a Recital Hearing may be recommended, taking place during Jury week of the semester in which the recital took place. Juniors who fail may not register for their Senior recital until a "Pass" has been granted by the Recital Hearing panel.

Below are the recommended procedures for putting on your music degree recital:

1. Planning. Please check [Recitals - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](http://www.cmu.edu/music/recitals) for official procedures. All students are required to confirm possible recital dates with their respective teachers and pianists BEFORE your scheduling appointment with Tabitha Pflieger. Due to venue availability, students are not guaranteed their preferred date/time, so it is important to discuss a few options with your teacher/pianist ahead of your appointment.
2. Scheduling. An email to all students and faculty will be sent sometime during the early fall semester, with details on when students may sign up.
3. Dress rehearsals. Dress rehearsals may be scheduled up to 8 weeks prior to the recital date. Those students performing recitals during the fall semester should schedule their

dress rehearsal at their initial scheduling appointment. Please consult with your teacher and pianist before scheduling dress rehearsals. It is recommended that students reserve at least 90 minutes of time for your dress rehearsals.

4. Publicize your recital. The Marketing and Communications office of the School of Music can accept your programs at any time after your recital date and time is scheduled. The Office of Marketing and Communications advises a two-week minimum for submitting all materials. Be sure to include location, date, and time on all materials you choose to promote your program!

## GRADING

The studio grade reflects both talent and effort. To receive an “A”, you must have a consistent record of hard work, have made substantial progress during the semester, and be performing in juries, convocations and/or recitals at a very high level of proficiency in comparison to your particular level of conservatory training. A student should not receive an “A” just because he/she works hard; nor will a student receive an “A” just because he/she has native ability.

For all required Junior, Senior and Graduate Recitals, students must register to receive a grade, which is separate from the studio grade.

The following scale reflects what each grade means:

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| A | Excellent              |
| B | Good                   |
| C | Satisfactory (Average) |
| D | Passing (Poor)         |
| R | Failing                |

Studio is the heart of your professional training as a musician. Since “Average” playing or composing is not sufficient to sustain a career in music, the faculty consider a “C” grade in the major studio as a symptom of either insufficient talent to continue as a performance major or inadequate work during the semester. A student will receive a letter of concern from the School Head whenever he/she receives a “C” or lower in the studio area. If “C’s” continue to be given in studio, the student may, at the discretion of the faculty, and upon evidence of problems in other professional courses, be asked to withdraw from the program. At the point of withdrawal, the student will be advised carefully and personally of the options available: to transfer to another music program in another setting, to transfer to another School at CMU, perhaps continuing in music as a minor, or to become a transitional student for one semester while taking university courses in preparation for a transfer to another college or university. In any case, the Director of Student Services and the School Head will work very closely with the student, and often with the parents, to ensure a healthy transition.

The faculty will continue to make a careful assessment of each student during the first year of study and will attempt to make a decision regarding his/her suitability for our program by the

conclusion of the sophomore year, at SOPHOMORE REVIEW. (please see “Sophomore Review Guidelines” page for more information)

Once a student enters the junior year, it is our policy to do everything we can to bring his/her program to a successful conclusion. Once a student enters the junior year, he/she will be dropped from the School of Music only under extraordinary circumstances, which may include a lack of progress, emotional or physical illness or injury, lack of practice or sufficient learning of required repertoire, and/or an overall lack of cooperation or willingness to be taught. Although the studio grade serves as the most important criteria for determining each student’s suitability for our program and for a possible career in music, this grade will not be the sole determinant in dropping a student from the School.

### Incomplete Grades

Any time a student is unable to complete a course or a group of courses, due to unavoidable circumstances, an “I” grade may be given for the incomplete work. If this becomes necessary, the student should discuss this grade option with each professor. It is ultimately the individual teacher’s decision as to the appropriateness of the “I” grade. “I” may not be given in instance where the student just did not do the work or chose to miss too many classes. All incompletes must be made up during the following semester, or the “I” grades revert to default grades. While it is the professor’s responsibility to fill out a “change of grade” form for the student at the completion of the required work, it is the student’s responsibility to determine exactly what needs to be done to complete the course and to do it.

### Studio Grades

As per the departmental syllabus, your grade in studio is made up of two elements:

- 75% determined by the studio teacher
- 25% by the average of the jury grades by the adjudicating faculty.

Grades in the studio are determined as follows, as recommended by the CFA:

- 50% Preparation. Preparation consists of completed assignments, quality of score preparation/study, independent thought, and understanding of style and text.
- 50% Participation. Participating in the studio includes attendance, technical understanding and mastery, performance, application of diction and language study, memorization, completed assignments, quality of music preparation and study, independent thought and understanding of style and text.

These recommended guidelines for teachers may be supplemented in your private voice teachers’ syllabus, so you are responsible for reading all materials carefully and thoughtfully.

## **CONCERT ATTENDANCE**

Concerts held in Mellon Institute and Carnegie Music Hall are particularly important to the visibility and the reputation of our School. These concerts include our major ensembles, faculty, and guest artist programs. All music events are free to music School faculty, staff and students. Attendance at these concerts is expected of everyone in the School! A small

audience in a large concert hall reflects poorly on the School of Music and on the performers. Understandably, we may not be able to attend every single concert, due to unforeseen circumstances, student recitals, evening opera rehearsals, etc...in those rare instances when you cannot attend a live concert, webcasts may be available for viewing at [Carnegie Mellon University School of Music - YouTube](#)

\*Voice students are REQUIRED to attend all on-campus voice recitals given by your voice faculty, and at least those recitals given by the members of your studio. It is recommended that each voice major attend (not watch on webcast, be in attendance live) a MINIMUM of 10-15 voice recitals per year, however, each studio teacher is responsible for student attendance, so please check your individual studio syllabi carefully.

## **CONVOCATION ATTENDANCE**

Typically, School of Music Convocations are held every Thursday from Kresge Hall. These meetings bring the entire School together once a week for special programs designed to enrich the educational experience. The yearly schedule of convocations includes faculty recitals, student performances, guest artists, guest lecturers, career seminars, and departmental meetings. All School of Music students are required to attend Convocation! (Three unexcused absences are allowed.) A full house is essential for the effectiveness of these programs. Attendance is taken and students receive Pass or Fail grades, which will be carefully considered before merit and special external scholarships are assigned to School of Music students. Please check your email for updates on upcoming convocation dates.

## **GRADUATION**

To be eligible to receive your diploma, you must have accomplished the following:

- ✓ Completed all of your required classes with final passing grades posted on your transcript and with a minimum 2.00 QPA (for undergraduate students) or a minimum 3.00 QPA (for graduate students)
- ✓ Performed all of your required recitals
- ✓ Passed all of your required proficiency tests
- ✓ Cleared your financial account

You can check the status of your classes and your financial account on the Student Online system at any time. See "Student Information Online" at <https://s3.as.cmu.edu/sio/index.html>.



# CMU Opera Auditions

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## Student Information

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name (please print)                              |  |
| Voice Type                                       |  |
| Classification as of<br>Fall 20__ (Jr, Sr, Grad) |  |
| Phone/Email                                      |  |

## PRODUCTIONS

|  |                       |         |
|--|-----------------------|---------|
| Have you read the libretti and/or listened to: | XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX | YES/ NO |
|  | XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX | YES/ NO |

What character(s) are you interested in portraying, and why? (You may also opt to write "ANY.")

## Additional Questions

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| 1. Have you taken an acting class within the last 2 years?           | YES/ NO |
| 2. Will you use profanity onstage?                                   | YES/ NO |
| 3. Will you kiss onstage?  | YES/ NO |
| 4. Are you willing to wear provocative clothing?                     | YES/ NO |
| 5. Are you willing to behave in sexually provocative manner onstage? | YES/ NO |

## Agreement and Signature

I understand one or more of these productions may contain adult language and/or subject matter and shall be performed as an unedited text. If cast, I agree to perform the libretto as written, to wear costumes and makeup/hair designs assigned to me, and to conduct myself in a professional manner.

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Signature |  |
| Date      |  |

## Our Policy

It is the policy of this audition panel to provide equal opportunities to our voice students at CMU, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual preference, age, or disability.

BEST OF LUCK TO YOU ALL!

Carnegie Mellon University  
School of Music

**PETITION  
for a Change of Studio Teacher**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Class \_\_\_\_\_  
Major \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to change my studio teacher beginning (*semester*) \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that I must submit this petition to the Head of the School of Music before action will be taken.

Signed, (*student's name*) \_\_\_\_\_

***Approval to proceed with request:***

Head or Dir. Of Student Services \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Present Studio Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

New Studio Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



***Approval to implement request:***

Head of the School of Music \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:



Procedure:

To change your studio teacher, you must receive the permission of your present studio teacher, your proposed new studio teacher, and the School Head. A space must be available on your proposed new studio teacher's roster. Before formally requesting a change in studio, students must discuss their concerns with their present studio teacher. Failure to do so may jeopardize the student's request for a studio change. The order of the procedure is as follows:

**Each step below must be completed by a signature obtained above before the next step in the process.**

- a. Discuss your request with the School Head or the Director of Student Services, if the change will be between school years. Requests for change between the semesters of a school year, especially during the freshman school year, may only be approved on the basis of individual emergency circumstances.
- b. Discuss your request with your present studio teacher.
- c. \*Fill out Studio Preference Form and submit it to Chair and/or Colby Carson
- d. Submit this petition to the School Head.

A request for a change of studio teacher for the following fall semester is finalized after the end of the preceding spring semester; it may not be possible to honor a request which is submitted later than June.

\*In this business, it is considered unethical to study voice with more than one teacher concurrently. For this reason, students wishing to change studios MUST NOT approach other teachers for sample lessons, or regarding studio availability.

## **School of Music**

### **Voice Department Sophomore Review Policies**

The BFA in Music Performance (Voice) undergraduate program requires a comprehensive review for all sophomores at the end of the academic year. This review replaces the second semester jury. The review committee consists of the members of the voice faculty, and it may include additional faculty from academic areas who have direct contact with the students during their first two years of study.

Meetings scheduled during the school year provide students with the opportunity to discuss the review policies and procedures in preparation for the review. After the review, the committee submits a review report to be filed in the student's permanent record. A copy of this report is placed in the student's School mail folder.

#### **Review Description**

All students will be in their fourth semester of private studio instruction. At this juncture, a strong sense of self-direction should be evident. They should be able to demonstrate a substantial level of musicality and a foundation of technical skills should be in place.

The Sophomore Review gives the students an opportunity to reflect upon their work and understand its patterns, strengths and deficiencies. It then provides the faculty an opportunity to assess the students' body of work and academic progress, in order to make recommendations regarding the individual's future course of study.

Each sophomore will prepare provide the review committee with the proper number of Sophomore Review evaluation forms, and a neatly arranged three-ring black binder, that includes the following materials:

- List of six pieces to be performed from memory: emphasis on the German language, including one selection from an oratorio (any language), and an example of secco recitativo (this may be connected to an aria selection, or a stand-alone recitativo, i.e. excerpts from Bach's *Johannes-Passion*)
- Word for word, *and* poetic translations for each of the six pieces
- One paragraph, structured as a program note, on one selection that discusses the piece stylistically, historically, and interpretively
- A summary of vocal performance activities from the last two years, including summer activities
- A statement of goals for the next two years
- Comprehensive repertoire list (including composers' dates), studied during the freshmen and sophomore years
- Resume (optional)

Students will begin their review with a repertoire selection of their choice, and then may be asked to sing any or all, of the rest of the selections on their program. This singing presentation should reflect excellence in musical preparation, vocal technique, performance practice, and the vocal stamina required to present a 25-30 minute recital program in the following year. The remainder of the session is a discussion between the student and the review committee.

#### **Review Evaluation**

The singing and non-singing portions of the students' presentation will be discussed and assessed upon the criteria above.

#### **Review Decision**

After the review, the committee will issue a written recommendation for one of the following courses of action:

- Continue in the program as scheduled
- Re-Review at the beginning of the next semester (you may not register for your junior recital until you are approved to continue in the program as scheduled)

Students who fail the Re-Review will be dismissed from the Voice Major Program at the College for Fine Arts.

Carnegie Mellon University  
School of Music

**PETITION**  
**for Course Substitution within a required curriculum**

I request the following course substitution be allowed in my academic program:

Substitute Course:

**A. Course Number and Section:** \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Credits: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Course: \_\_\_\_\_

FALL          SPRING          SUMMER          (circle one)          of          YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

For:

**B. Course Number and Section:** \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Credits: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Course: \_\_\_\_\_

FALL          SPRING          SUMMER          (circle one)          of          YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

If the course substitution is granted, I understand that I am required to enroll in Course A during the

FALL          SPRING          SUMMER          (circle one)          of          YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title: Instructor of Course A

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title: Instructor of Course B or School Head

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



APPROVED

DISAPPROVED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Additional Comments:

Carnegie Mellon University School of Music  
**EXCUSED ABSENCE PETITION**

Name

Class (junior, graduate, etc.)

Major (composition, violin, etc.)

**I am requesting to be excused from the following academic activities:**

CMU Academic Activity (*Harmony I class session, Baroque Ensemble rehearsal, etc.*)

Reason (*illness/emergency reason or outside professional opportunity/non-emergency reason – Please provide complete and detailed information.*)

Date(s) (*dates of the activity affected by the reason*)

*Student: Please present your petition to the faculty in the order below.*

*Faculty: Please check the appropriate box, date and sign the petition, and return it to the student. It will be filed in the student's folder.*

Signature:

Approved   Conditionally Approved   Disapproved

Date

1.

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_   
cannot \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
Studio Teacher – Printed Name / Signature  
(all outside professional opportunities and any applicable academic activity above)

if studio grade is incomplete    studio  
be passed

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_   
 ensemble can- \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
Ensemble Director – Printed Name / Signature  
(all outside professional opportunities and any applicable academic activity above)

if ensemble grade is incomplete  
not be passed

2.

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_   
cannot \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
Faculty Instructor – Printed Name / Signature  
(applicable academic activity above)

if grade is incomplete    class  
 if grade is pass/fail\*   be passed  
*\*undergrad electives only*

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_   
cannot \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
Faculty Instructor – Printed Name / Signature  
(applicable academic activity above)

if grade is incomplete    class  
 if grade is pass/fail\*   be passed  
*\*undergrad electives only*

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_   
cannot \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
Faculty Instructor – Printed Name / Signature  
(applicable academic activity above)

if grade is incomplete    class  
 if grade is pass/fail\*   be passed  
*\*undergrad electives only*

3.

\_\_\_\_\_   
 \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
Head of the School of Music  
(only if approval by the faculty is not unanimous)

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes:

**What**

- For one reason, submit one petition for all affected academic activities to all applicable faculty.
- If applicable, attach appropriate documentation, which can include but is not limited to the following:
  - for illness, a detailed note from the Carnegie Mellon Student Health Service or other medical office;
  - for an outside professional opportunity, a complete schedule of rehearsals and/or concerts or productions, audition or competition dates, and the contact information for the organization.

**When**

- For an illness or other emergency reason, submit this petition, and applicable documentation, as soon as possible after the tardiness or absence

[see applicable syllabi for specific deadlines].

- For an outside professional opportunity or other non-emergency reason, submit this petition, and applicable documentation, **as early as possible and before making a commitment**  
[see applicable syllabi for specific deadlines].

**Misc**

- Use this petition as specified in the excuse policies, especially the deadlines, for the affected studio lesson(s), ensemble(s), or class(es) [see applicable syllabi].
- Approval of an excused absence is not guaranteed. It is more likely that your petition to be absent for an outside professional opportunity will be approved if the following factors apply:  
**appropriate advance notice; reasonable amount of time absent; no dress rehearsals, concerts, or exams during the time absent; and you are in good academic standing.**