

PRESENTER TOOL KIT

Workshop Descriptions

PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUES

1-3 hours | large group & 2-8 individual singers | pianist required

In this interactive workshop, singers learn specific skills to focus the mind and body, how to center their energy on and off stage, and how to stay in-the-moment. Some of the more common obstacles singers face are (1) what to do with their arms in performance, (2) how to be spontaneous onstage, and (3) how to eliminate negative self-talk while singing. Also addressed are any physical, musical and mental 'blocks' that may stand in the way of giving committed, impassioned and courageous performances. A portion of the workshop is focused on group exercises before Ms. Baltz works individually with a few singers in a master class setting. The focus of this session is to identify singers' strengths and performance styles, and how to highlight those in an audition or performance situation.

OPERA IMPROVISATION WORKSHOP

1-1.5 hours | large or small groups | piano required

Operatic improvisation is not normally a part of the standard opera curriculum, but when singers are liberated from the boundaries of "Right and Wrong" and encouraged to explore their own creativity, they can produce results, both vocal and musical, that are nothing short of astonishing. All attendees will be invited to participate in improvisations designed to increase listening sensitivity, harmonic awareness, vocal expression, and emotional connection to music. Performers are eased into the process through group activities that can lead to arias and duets.

PASTICHE OPERA PROJECT

8-12 hours | 8-10 singers | rehearsal room & performance space | pianist required

A pastiche opera project is custom-designed to fit the needs and schedule of students and faculty. Developing and performing a pastiche opera challenges singers to rely on their experience and dramatic instincts to create and perform a semi-improvised opera. By incorporating singers' own repertoire into an original storyline with new characters, singers discover deeper meanings in the text and music. A short rehearsal period focuses on developing singers' new characters, understanding aria texts as conversation, and telling a story as real people through singing, acting, and improvised dialogue. This project has proven to be a powerful educational experience for performers as they discover that their techniques *are* stronger than they thought they were, that they *are* able to act realistically on stage, and that they *are* imaginative and creative artists.

WHOLISTIC PEDAGOGY

1-2 hours | faculty and/or vocal pedagogy class | classroom setting

In this workshop designed for voice faculty and vocal pedagogy students, we will explore the impact of language used in teaching studios. We will delve into different learning styles and their influence on individual teaching methods. Practical examples will be provided for various student types, addressing their specific needs, and discussing effective approaches. The goal is for both teachers and students to leave each lesson with a sense of accomplishment. The session will conclude with a Q&A to address concerns and generate innovative ideas.

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AUDITION TECHNIQUES

1-2 hours | large group & 2-4 individual singers | pianist required

Auditions are job interviews. This workshop describes the audition process – before, during, and after - including topics such as market research, the singer's product, printed materials, repertoire choices, attire, audition performance, and follow up. A trial audition with immediate feedback and a trial callback complete the workshop.

MAKING A THREE-YEAR PLAN

1.5-2 hours | large or small groups | classroom setting

Every successful businessperson knows that having a well-defined product and a strong business plan are crucial to their success. Most singers have neither. In a 1.5 hour session, singers learn to define their product, identify their career goals, and begin a three-year plan to accomplish those goals. Longer sessions may also address setting fees, time management, and taxes.

ROLE PREPARATION

1 -1.5 hours | large group | classroom or auditorium setting

This workshop approaches role preparation from a whole person perspective: how each singer learns best, and how their own personality and musical/dramatic impulses play into their preparation of a role. A portion of the workshop is focused on how to organize the student's time efficiently to learn a role so that research, text study, character building, learning and memorizing the music, and physicalizing the role can be accomplished successfully by the first rehearsal. Included are essential organizational handouts.

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Pastiche Projects

pas·tiche | pa-'stēsh, pä-'stēsh

a musical, literary, or artistic composition made up of selections from different works.

Pastiche Projects are a result of my passion to re-contextualize classical art song, opera and musical theatre repertoire into original storylines that address relevant social issues. Pedagogically, the productions:

- // require performers to re-think their pieces dramatically and musically as new characters,
- // provide a contemporary and deeply human perspective on singers' repertoire,
- // put a human face on a social issue for performers and audience.

The collaborative process begins with a survey of a school's voice and opera faculty about their students' repertoire and unique skill sets. From that information I develop the project's subject and storyline, tailored specifically for those students. New characters are assigned and relationships defined per the repertoire, and the dialogue is developed through improvisation in rehearsal and performance.

The vast majority of my creative process occurs weeks before the short rehearsal period begins, including direct collaboration with the faculty and, sometimes, an online video call with the performers. The short rehearsal process is fast-paced and leaves little time to overthink or over-rehearse, requiring students to rely on their intuition and musical-dramatic impulses onstage.

With Pastiche Projects students engage their imaginations as they learn character development skills by creating a new story without preconceived character ideas. Setting the productions in high-stakes situations develops genuine relationship connections and emotional responses from performers.

For most students these types of productions provide an up-close and first-hand experience with a social issue and the people involved on all sides of the topic. They become deeply invested in researching their characters and the situation in general. For them, the issue is no longer just a headline on social media.

Similarly, it has been exciting to witness audience engagement and visceral response to social issues through these productions. To experience hot-topic issues through live music/drama theater makes the human impact much more real and personal than a news article. Talk-backs following performances offer the audience an important opportunity to ask questions about the creative process, the subject matter, and the students' reactions.

I have created and co-created more than 40 pastiche projects through OperaWorks and at institutions throughout the U.S. Each production encompasses a dramatic and musical flow that includes light and dark moments. The goal is to present all sides of an issue to encourage awareness and understanding in students and audiences alike.

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PREVIOUS PRODUCTION EXAMPLES

Peabody Conservatory at John Hopkins University (film)	<i>Covid shutdown - "Isolation" *</i>
University of the Pacific (film)	<i>Homelessness - "Belonging" *</i>
San Diego State University (film)	<i>Disinformation & conspiracies - "The Disinformed"</i>
Bowling Green State University	<i>U.S. Border Immigration</i>
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley at Brownsville	<i>Bi-lingual, Bi-cultural University Life</i>
OperaWorks	<i>Refugee Crisis</i>
OperaWorks	<i>Internet's effects on relationships</i>
Ithaca College	<i>Homelessness</i>
North Park University	<i>Women's prison</i>
California State University Northridge	<i>War in Afghanistan</i>
California State University Northridge	<i>Homelessness</i>

Repertoire re-contextualized in productions:

"Ah, Love but a day" (Amy Beach)	<i>girl worried about losing her boyfriend during pandemic</i>
"Dove Sono" (Mozart)	<i>wife of the prison guard who assaults female inmates</i>
"If Music Be the Food of Love" (Purcell)	<i>homeless man grieving his best friend's death</i>
"In questa tomba oscura" (Beethoven)	<i>dead soldier to unfaithful wife</i>
"Litany" (Musto)	<i>shelter worker's epilogue to audience</i>
"Must the Winter Come So Soon" (Barber)	<i>female prisoner after assault, alone in cell</i>
"Trees on the Mountain" (Floyd)	<i>abused single mother with baby</i>
Medley:	
"Lydia" (Fauré), "Come Ready and See Me" (Hundley)	<i>wife and husband separated by war</i>
Medley:	
"You Matter to Me" (Bareilles), "You Will Be Found" (Pasek/ Paul)	<i>teacher to depressed students</i>

* can be viewed at www.annbaltz.com/media