

# STUDIO HANDBOOK

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## Credo

***I teach in order to share my life's passions. I teach in order to help you find your life's passions. People who have found their passions know the freedom of discipline, respect others, and have opportunities to make contributions to the culture of humanity - perhaps even to the culture of the planet! If your passions live in my territory, I'll do my best to help you make a set of maps. If you can't find your passions in my vicinity, they do exist somewhere. It's your responsibility to find, develop and manifest them. Go with my love.***

Required Reading for All Upon Entry to Studio:

**Nurtured by Love**

**Shinichi Suzuki ISBN 0 87487 584 6**

LEARNING STYLES: Here are several different websites with quite different ways of processing data that you supply. There are many more to choose from. Please try some out, see what results seem consistent and share those outcomes with me. These insights may help us communicate efficiently and enjoyably.

[www.learning-styles-online.com](http://www.learning-styles-online.com)

<http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles-quiz.shtml>

<https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/?p=results>

# STUDIO POLICIES

## Singer Life

In order to excel as a singer, you must care for your body's health even more carefully than an instrumentalist must care for their medium:

- Keep a thermometer handy and know your own personal average body temperatures (morning, noon and night – it fluctuates). If you believe you're becoming ill, check your temperature at reasonable intervals. If you have a fever, it is your responsibility to take action to cure your illness as soon as possible. Likewise, you must avoid infecting others.
- In 32-degree-and-below weather you will need a humidifier (preferably warm steam vapor) and humidity gauge in your resting/sleeping space, which must be cleaned frequently. You should use nasal passage protection (water soluble gel or Vaseline) daily or more frequently.
- Regular meals and regular exercise are also necessities. When in doubt, carry snacks that sustain you. Stop by my office for a power bar if you're in need.
- Know your optimal sleep habits. Adequate sleep is absolutely essential and will often be an influential factor in your work and play plans.
- Basic Vocal Health Supplements: Salt water gargle; slippery elm lozenges; Fisherman's Friend cough lozenges; A WARM HAT and SOCKS!

## Bureaucracy

We'll use the Google Calendar system for lesson schedule management. Please provide me with your gmail address. I'll invite you to my calendar, and you will have access once your regular lessons are in place.

I will make every effort to arrange an agreeable lesson time for you. Once I've worked out a typical schedule, it will be posted on the google calendar. If you need to make occasional adjustments, please alert me by email not less than 3 days ahead of time. I'll do my best to try to accommodate.

It is your responsibility to register for the appropriate course numbers including Lesson, Studio Class and Vocal Studies Class (VSC), and to check that the registration number is accurate for your level of study.

When preparing for hearings, juries or recitals, you must submit a neatly organized list of your repertoire (larger work from which your selection is excerpted, opus numbers, et cet); composer (with dates of birth/death); poet; and accompanist(s)/collaborators. I'm happy to proof read.

***I expect to be consulted about any performances, rehearsals or ensembles in which you wish to sing beyond the one choir to which you are assigned. If you fail to discuss and secure my approval of an engagement, or secure my awareness-with-reservation, I reserve the right to dismiss you from the studio. This applies equally to any voice teaching commitments you may wish to***

*make. I also appreciate being consulted regarding any demanding extra-curricular activities (sports teams, clubs or theatrical productions) you are considering.*

If you are participating in a course or project that includes movement/staging, it is your responsibility to maintain in your personal wardrobe a black outfit as appropriate to you. Either:

- Well-fitting and flexible pants with belt & well-fitting shirt (Turtleneck OK) with dance shoes;
- Or**
- A knee- or calf-length dress/jumper with sleeves *and* a well-fitting pants outfit, character dance shoes and dance flats.

## **Attendance**

Arrive vocally warmed-up for your lesson and for all studio classes (whether or not you're scheduled to sing). At the appointed time please enter and prepare for your lesson quietly while the previous lesson is wrapping up.\*

If you must cancel a lesson due to illness, you should know and inform me **and your collaborative pianist** at least 12 hours in advance (excepting dire emergency). You may reschedule ONE lesson per quarter, whether for illness or other circumstance. More than one lesson missed/postponed will precipitate a meeting for us in which we decide how to move forward.

If I become ill or must be away for your regular lesson time, I will likewise reschedule those lessons at our mutual convenience.

You must inform me if you will not be present in Studio Class due to illness, in which case we will arrange a make-up assignment. **Studio Class is essential the LAB portion of this course. If/when conflicts arise with course schedules and other labs, you will need to work with all your professors to arrange adjustments that are in your best interest.**

\*COVID Protocols may override this system

## **In the Lesson**

This is your time, which I very happily devote especially to your growth and development. You can expect an uninterrupted lesson, with only very occasional exceptions. Lessons are technically 50 minutes, but I will typically offer you a full 60 minutes if you are working well and can use the extra time to good advantage.

Please bring your personal recording device to every lesson. Review the lesson about 24 hours later. Transcribe any exercises and note any new concepts. This

process should inform your practice plans for the week, and over time, will help you assess your growth. Further, an up-to-date transcript of exercises and concepts will help you with your end-of-year Portfolio.

You should be getting in at least FOURS HOURS of practice time on your own for each hour that we spend together. Do not take a new lesson until you have reviewed the previous lesson recording, applied the principles, and you are ready for more input from me.

When I assign you a new piece of music for which you must obtain a score, you must do so before the next lesson. If you arrive for your next lesson without the new score, I reserve the right to terminate the lesson. Please note in the appendixes, several locations from which you can find, or purchase and receive most scores immediately.

When you present a new piece to me, it should be prepared to the following standards:

- 1) Word-for-word translation of text with comprehension of meaning.
- 2) IPA when necessary (i.e: italian open/closed E and O).
- 3) Accurate pitches and rhythms.
- 4) Breath Phrasing decisions.

I do expect to help you with some difficult poetic ideas, language syntax, etc. I do not expect to teach you basic pitches and rhythms.

The structure of the typical lesson should follow this pattern:

- 1) Brief period of vocalises
- 2) Sing-Through of very familiar song
- 3) Presentation of new material
- 4) Rather Familiar song (if time permits)

### **In the Practice Room**

Learning how to practice efficiently and enjoyably is a VITAL part of your work as a singer. I expect the lesson to assist you in learning how to focus on specific tasks, and I expect that you will guide yourself through the methods that you learn in the lesson, maintaining that systematic structure for practice time.

The following concept is the most important part of my philosophy of practice, and I hope it will inform all of your specific tasks:

## **YOU LEARN HOW TO DO SOMETHING WELL BY MAKING CORRECT REPETITIONS**

- Two or more brief sessions per day are far preferable to one long session.
- Novice students should practice about twenty minutes at a time.
- Intermediate students should practice about 30 minutes at a time.
- Advanced students should not practice more than forty-five minutes at a time.

The following concept is the most important part of my philosophy of learning a song, and I hope it will inform all of your specific tasks:

### **THE COMPOSER EXPECTS YOU TO BRING LINGUISTIC AND EMOTIONAL INTERPRETATION TO THE SONG**

Reciting the text should be a regular and frequent preparation to singing.

***You must be able to recognize and communicate the consonances and dissonances between spoken word stress and the stress chosen by the composer.***

Please use these criteria as you work:

- 1) What are you singing about?**
- 2) What clues are given by the composer?**
- 3) What performance practice might occur that isn't on the page?**
- 4) What is possible for you at this point in your development?**

Remember that much of your work will be non-singing: preceding your actual singing time: Translating, researching the style and related information, studying other works of the same composer... Even if you're unable to practice singing, you can still do important work

## **KEY**

**Develop a KEY: a list of aesthetics and methods written in a way that is meaningful and helpful to you. Keep a LOG: a record of events in your practice time. Show me what you're doing with this process at regular intervals.**

Start from the big picture OR the details:

Either

Create a list of every skill you need to make music/sing/perform, then organize the list into categories that are useful to you,

Or

List the categories in which you want your performance to be successful, then give the categories specificity by listing each skill that contributes to the goal.

## Define methods for achieving each skill

This document will evolve as you do. Your diligence and skill in updating the document will likely mirror your evolving abilities.

A basic list that may be helpful to you as you define the qualities of singing:

### Technique

breathing  
posture  
jaw/face/tongue  
fioratura  
vibrato

### Vocal Tone

clarity  
resonance  
intonation  
timbre  
fluency

### Diction

comprehension  
consonants  
vowels  
inflection

### Musicianship

pitch and rhythm accuracy  
dynamics  
phrasing  
articulation  
memorization  
appropriate style

### Overall Performance

appropriateness of music  
interpretation  
appearance  
vitality  
stage presence

What is the aesthetic of each quality listed? What do YOU do to achieve each of these qualities? Do these qualities overlap in category? Do some qualities belong in other categories?

## LOG

- Keep a daily log of your practice times and activities
- Identify events as specifically as is useful to self and PM
- Clarify, define, discuss routines with PM during lesson
- Logs may also be used for narrative, but will not be valued for this

Logs will be assessed for:

Regularity of entry  
Specificity of events  
Correlation to demonstrated improvement in singing  
Usefulness!

## PRACTICE LOG EXAMPLE

**A=Aesthetic**

**M=Method**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Subject \_\_\_\_\_

A \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_

### **Guidelines for Grading**

Students should typically be learning and performing/recording no less than 5 new pieces per quarter, as well as refining and recording/reviewing and performing 3 other pieces.

Demonstrating integrity in 'Singer Life,' taking increasing responsibility for your musical and vocal development and making the most of your opportunities and abilities are difficult qualities to quantify but are aspects of your work in the Studio that you should consider regularly. **I wish to remind you that average progress is not likely to prepare a person for the world of professional singing or teaching.** It is thrilling to watch a person, or to be a person who is working at their capacity. My grading is meant to encourage you toward such satisfaction, and to move you toward accurate self-assessment. If you have any concerns about a grade impending or awarded, please speak to me candidly and in a timely fashion.

-You and I will assess using the following criteria. Each student begins with an A, and loses credit for the following:

- Inadequate progress with repertoire
- Inadequate progress with technique
- Inadequate progress with language skills
- Missing/Inadequate Portfolio (Q3)
- Missing/Inadequate key
- Missing/Inadequate log
- Habitual lateness to lesson
- Habitual lateness or absence from Studio Class or Voice Department events

## **Repertoire**

**The Term Song Plan:** I have prepared an anthology of song repertoire designed to help you develop critical listening and reproduction skills while building your own permanent repertoire. For freshmen, each piece will have an 'ideal' performance for you to emulate. When you can accurately reproduce the diction, phrasing, articulation, dynamic and ornamentation of the 'ideal' performer, you will learn the next piece on the list. One song per term is the minimum requirement. You may choose to move through the repertoire faster than one song per term if you wish.

### **Undergraduate Term Curriculum**

Each term includes a song assignment, which your cohort is expected to prepare to exact phrasing and interpretation standards, with the help of recordings by master singers. The first three terms are performances I choose for you to emulate. Advance to the new term repertoire when you have mastered and performed the previous term piece.

| Term I   | Term II                      | Term III                       |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Year ONE Handel <i>Art Thou Troubled?</i>      | Schubert <i>An die Musik</i> | Debussy <i>Romance</i>         |
| Year TWO Bellini <i>Ma, rendi pur contento</i> | Spanish Choice*              | Tosti <i>La serenata</i>       |
| Year THREE Musto <i>Litany</i>                 | Zhao Jiping "Guan Ju"        | Brahms <i>Wir wandelten</i>    |
| Year FOUR Duparc <i>Chanson triste</i>         | Donizetti <i>Amiamo</i>      | Rachmaninoff <i>Lilacs</i>     |
| Year FIVE Dvorák <i>Když mne stará matka</i>   | Gounod/Bach <i>Ave Maria</i> | Purcell <i>An Evening Hymn</i> |

\*Manuel de Falla

Manuel Fernández Caballero

Fernando Obradors

"Canción" from *Siete canciones populares*

"Amor sin esperanza"

"Del cabello más sutil"

**Personalized Repertoire:** Each student is encouraged to share her/his interests. I'll be happy to work with you on material you love and will help you organize it into coherent levels of difficulty. I'll expect you to try out material I suggest, but if you find it undesirable for whatever reason, be sure to let me know. There's more than enough great music for us to agree on!



**Portfolio:** Each year in the studio culminates in the student preparing a permanent document of the best of the years' work. Video, text translation, background information, interpretative notes and compatible visual art choices are required for assessment and permanent archiving.

## **Studio Class**

In Studio Class, all students actively support each other in the process development. Presence, preparation, attentiveness and helpfulness are vital. You will be scheduled to perform at least twice each quarter. Provide your collaborator(s) with a clean copy of your score at least 7 days in advance, and rehearse to prepare for a comfortable first performance experience.

## **Performances**

The Studio will plan occasional performances when there is a compelling theme or need for additional performance opportunities for the group. Students are welcome to bring ideas for the group.

## **Collaborators**

It is necessary that you develop strong musical and personal relationships with instrumentalists who will assist you in performance.

For the lesson, you will typically be assigned a collaborative pianist. That person will typically be present for the second half of each lesson. You will usually be able to call on that person for an additional 25 minute coaching outside of the lesson as well.

When you are tasked with choosing a collaborator, please keep in mind the following:

- Ask the most competent player first (discuss with me if necessary)
- Clearly state your request (performance date; repertoire; anticipated rehearsal period; payment)
- Set a rehearsal schedule together, with your calendars
- Provide scores at least 7 days before your first rehearsal
- TRANSLATIONS MUST BE WORD-FOR-WORD
- Do not expect your collaborator to help you learn pitches and rhythms
- If the collaborator is struggling with pitches and rhythms, politely suggest that you rehearse at a later date, after they have prepared
- Rehearse at least once before you present anything to me
- Arrange to have your collaborator attend your lesson or a special coaching
- Agree to attend the lesson of your collaborator, should they wish it

## ***A Word About Written Work***

Our work in the voice lesson is integral with your liberal arts education. Your preparation as a singer includes the ability to write cogent program notes and prepare excellent translations. Written work can also be an opportunity for make-up or extra credit.

Writing must demonstrate ***your*** critical thinking skills and the correlation between external influences and your own singing. If you cite another person's concept or statement, you ***must*** credit it and provide your own support for the necessity of its inclusion in your work. In the case of translations, if you wish to use someone's extant translation, you must secure permission, and include the appropriate attribution.

You should already be conversant with the concept of plagiarism. Here are the NU guidelines, should you need a refresher at any point:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/how-to-avoid-plagiarism.html>

I encourage you to attend the lessons of other students, both in our studio and in the studios of my colleagues. Among our own studio members, you should mention your intentions to the student whose lesson you would like to observe. For all other studios, you should formally request the teacher and student to allow an observation each time you wish to do so.

Any student who feels uncomfortable with this 'open studio' policy should speak with me privately. There will be certain lessons in anyone's progress where the student prefers not to be observed. These occasional needs will be respected.

## **In the World**

- I would like all of you to participate in a very active singing life. I'll keep you aware of contests that may be appropriate. I encourage you to explore your musical interests and develop ways you can share them with all kinds of audiences (community outreach performing).

- If you are planning to sing or teach music professionally, you should be looking to **summer job opportunities** that support your career goals.

Read *Classical Singer* magazine, sign up for YAP Tracker, surf the net/chat rooms for singers, and be proactive with me about planning your **summer singing jobs**. If you haven't done it by early December each year, you'll likely miss your opportunity.

### **Caveat**

***I welcome your assistance in developing studio policies. These guidelines are here to help you, not to constrict you.***

***If you feel unclear or uncomfortable about anything pedagogical, procedural, or personal, it is your responsibility to let me know. I will do my very best to respond to your concern, and maintain the atmosphere of trust and commitment necessary to both of us and all of us.***

***Try as we may, we are all likely to make mistakes in spite of our best efforts. I promise I won't be afraid to say I'm sorry if I err, and I won't be too proud to try something I haven't thought of yet, if you suggest it first. Please be candid and keep me aware and informed.***

## **ADDENDA**

**ONLINE SOURCE FOR TRANSLATION:** <http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/lieder.htm>

### **Texts for Your Consideration**

#### PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

The Practice of Practice  
The Vocal Coach Approach  
A Soprano on Her Head  
The Music Lesson  
Settle The Score  
Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance  
The Inner Game of Tennis  
Sports Psyching  
The Singer's Life: Goals and Roles  
A Dictionary for the Modern Singer.

Jonathan Harnum  
Susan Shiplett Ashbaker  
Eloise Ristad  
Victor L. Wooten  
Kevin Skelton  
Robert L. Pirsig  
W. Timothy Gallwey  
Thomas Tutko & Umberto Tosi  
Clifton Ware  
Matthew Hoch

## LEARNING SINGING

The Naked Voice: A Wholistic Approach to Singing  
Vocal Wisdom  
Caruso & the Art of Singing  
Caruso & Tetrizzini on the Art of Singing  
The Inner Voice

W Stephen Smith  
G B Lamperti  
Fucito & Beyer  
Themselves  
Renée Fleming

## SINGING TECHNIQUE

Dynamics of the Singing Voice  
Principles of Voice Production  
Singing: The Mechanism & the Technic  
Music, the Brain and Ecstasy  
A Spectrum of Voices

Meribeth Bunch  
Ingo Titze  
William Vennard  
Robert Jourdain  
Elizabeth Blade-Zeller

## BUSINESS OF SINGING

The Singer's Audition & Career Handbook

Claudia Friedlander

## SINGERS AND OTHER MUSICIANS

The Performer's Voice  
The Last Prima Donna  
The American Opera Singer  
Great Singers on Great Singing  
Composers on Music  
The Joy of Music  
Cry to Heaven  
Effortless Mastery

Meribeth Bunch  
Lanfranco Rasponi  
Peter G. Davis  
Jerome Hines  
ed. Sam Morgenstern  
Leonard Bernstein  
Anne Rice  
Kenneth Werner

## **PLACES TO PROCURE SCORES:**

*-IF THE MUSIC LIBRARY DOESN'T HAVE IT, PLEASE PUT IN A REQUEST TO HAVE IT PURCHASED.  
YOU HELP BUILD THE COLLECTION THAT WAY, AND PROVIDE RESOURCES/SAVE TIME FOR OTHERS.*

**Northwestern Music Library**  
**Online and In Person**  
**Greg MacAyeal, Curator**

IMSLP (Petrucci OnLine Music Library)  
Imslp.org  
Out of Copyright scores only

## CLASSICAL VOCAL REPRINTS

Glendower Jones, owner  
1 800 298-7474

Hal Leonard Milwaukee  
414 774-3630  
www.sheetmusicdirect.com

EDUCATIONAL MUSIC SERVICE  
914 469-5817  
Fax only with credit card  
mailing address: 13 Elkay Drive  
Phone with credit card  
Lois Fyfe Music (choral specialist)  
615 386-3542

National Book Network/  
University Press of America  
Blue Ridge Summit, PA  
800 462-6420  
338-4550 fax

### **SCORE RENTAL/PERUSAL:**

Schirmer  
212 254-2100 Schirmer (Salabert, others)  
45 Bellvale Rd  
Chester, NY 109  
Arlene Lempka ([al@schirmer.com](mailto:al@schirmer.com));Katie Plybon, promotions

Boosey & Hawkes 212 358-5300

Hal Leonard (Ricordi, Boosey & Hawkes..)  
212 358-5306, 01 fax Jonathan perusal  
07 rental

Doblinger, Vienna

Presser (Ed. Max Eschig; Enoch&See)

### **Performance Reviews**

I strongly recommend that you take brief notes during each concert you attend. Make an outline draft not more than 3 days after the performance. I usually request rough drafts and corrections of the younger writers. Each of you is welcome to request my guidance/response at all points in the development of the document. Your final drafts may be included in your Portfolio.

WHO/WHERE/WHEN: Complete info, as if for a published review.

WHAT: Nature of the presentation. If the title is suggestive enough to provide a starting point for the following, use it. If not, perhaps trying to create a meaningful title would help focus your review.

-What was attempted?

-How ambitious was the chosen task?

## HOW:

- Forces employed
- Structure of presentation
- Technical skills
- Supporting materials (program notes, explanations, your previous experience with group/individual)

## WHAT VALUE DID IT HAVE:

- To those in attendance
- To the reviewer in particular
- Within the larger world of performance/within human culture