

It Takes A Village: Collaborative Teaching in the Undergraduate Voice Studio

While collaborative teaching is not a novel concept, especially in the private voice studio, it has not been fully embraced in the academic sphere. A competitive studio culture in academic institutions, however, is not always beneficial to singers or professors. The use of a collaborative teaching model can create a sense of community within a program and offers an inclusive approach to studio voice instruction in academia. With full time positions being cut and adjunct positions on the rise, collaboration between voice faculty can help ensure students feel supported during their academic career when their applied teachers are not on campus full time.

At Kirkwood Community College we have been engaging in collaborative teaching for some time. In Spring 2020 -at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic- we pooled our resources and expanded communication between students and teachers. Employing a variety of tools and techniques (listed below), our collaborative model provides students with access to all of the voice faculty in various forms and offers opportunities to hear skills explained in various ways. We have found that a collaborative approach to teaching studio voice has many benefits, including but not limited to: greater trust between studio teachers and increased student interest in feedback and growth.

This panel discussion will be an overview of how we have achieved collaborative teaching with our voice majors at Kirkwood Community College. Subjects discussed will include:

- Voice Performance Seminar
- Musical Theatre Scenes Recitals
- Communication between Full-time and Adjunct Faculty
- Shared lesson grading rubric
- Song worksheets and lesson logs
- Post Covid Collaborations
 - Video Skill Library
 - Warm ups/Vocalizes
 - Diction
 - Interpretation
 - Pedagogy
 - Marco Polo
 - Technology
 - Practice Partners

Dr. Allison Holmes-Bendixen is a member of the voice faculties at Kirkwood Community College and Coe College in Cedar Rapids, IA; where she teaches a variety of music courses and collaborates frequently with her generous and talented colleagues. An active performer and educator, she has presented research, recitals, and masterclasses throughout the United States and Europe. Most recently, Allison performed the role of Mabel in *Pirates of Penzance* with Opera Quad Cities (2019), worked as a Vocal Coach on productions of *Matilda* and *Kinky Boots* at Theatre Cedar Rapids (2019/20), and served as Music Director for Kirkwood Theatre's production of *Sweeney Todd*

(2019). She holds a Ph.D. in Vocal Pedagogy from the University of Iowa, a M.M. in Voice Performance from the University of Illinois, and a B.M. in Music Education from Simpson College.

Benjamin Laur has sung the roles of Rinuccio in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Marco in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*, Jasper in Mechem's *The Rivals*, and The Magician in Menotti's *The Consul* with the University of Iowa Martha-Ellen Tye Opera Theatre. He has also performed with Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, Toledo Opera, Bowling Green State University Opera, Central Michigan University Opera Theatre, and Central Michigan University Music Theatre, singing the titular role of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Koko in Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado*, Fred/Petruccio in Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate*, and numerous ensemble credits. Laur earned his Bachelor of Music from Central Michigan University studying with Eric Tucker, DMA, his Master of Music from Bowling Green State University with Sean Cooper, DMA, and his Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Iowa with John Muriello, DMA. Laur teaches voice at Kirkwood Community College and Cornell College.

Juan Carlos Mendoza, Tenor, is a native of Muscatine, IA. Recent performances include tenor soloist in Haydn's *Missa in Tempore Belli*, Ford's *Bolts of Melody*, and Tenor Evangelist in Pärt's *Passio*. Stage roles include Aarón/Javier in the world premiere of *Tienda*, Freddy in *My Fair Lady*, and Tigranes in the North American premiere of Cavalli's *La Doriclea*. Chorus work includes *Tannhäuser* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, as well as *Carmina Burana* (Orff), *Harmoniemesse* (Haydn), and *The Kingdom* (Elgar) with the Grant Park Music Festival (GPMF) Chorus. Concert highlights include Tenor Soloist in *Messiah* (Handel), *Requiem* (Mozart), *Magnificat* and *Mass in g minor* (Bach), and Uriel in *Creation* (Haydn). Mr. Mendoza received a Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Arts from the University of Iowa, and a Bachelor of Music from The Juilliard School. He currently serves on the voice faculties of Augustana College and Kirkwood Community College.

Soprano **Jessica Saunders** is a performer, teacher, and clinician based in Jesup, IA. Comfortable performing in a variety of styles, Saunders has performed in opera, musical theatre productions, and concerts throughout the state of Iowa. Favorite roles include Soprano Soloist in *Messiah*, Frieda in *Sunday in the Park with George*, Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*, Despina in *Così fan Tutte*, and Fiametta in *The Gondoliers*. Saunders teaches applied voice at Kirkwood Community College and runs a flourishing private voice studio, Saunders Vocal Studios, in Coralville and Jesup, Iowa. She has also been on faculty at Grinnell College and Waldorf College where she taught Applied Voice, Vocal Pedagogy, Diction, Song Literature, and ran Opera Workshop. Saunders holds a D.M.A. in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Iowa, an M.M. in vocal performance from the University of Northern Iowa, and a B.M. in vocal performance from Wartburg College.