

This Will Be Our Response: Voices of COVID-19

This series of interviews seeks to capture the lived experiences of the vocal performing arts during the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020. The project began on March 16, 2020 and remains ongoing. Interviewees are drawn from every walk of life in the vocal performing arts from agents, singers, opera companies, to Broadway casting directors, stage managers, and composers, etc. The goal has been to produce a sizable account of the community; not to judge, but to provide space to explore the realities of this situation and learn about how best to support the delicate balance of the global arts community.

By working together our community can push forward past this devastating crisis. No one is unaffected. No one is happy with this situation. The community of performing arts must recognize that we are here to serve our communities and to supply their innate, and very human, longing for art. One of the strongest threads that runs through the interviews is the genuine empathy that is shown in our field. This common theme comes through in expressing the grief that we share for the arts, but also for each other. The arts survive as a community and this compassion is essential to our world, especially today.

The title of this project was drawn from the legendary quote from Leonard Bernstein; it's meaning is profound here as well. We must dig deep, find the core of what it is that we want to become as a community. It is never comfortable, but great art never is.

During the presentation, I will discuss the genesis of this project and how I was granted the opportunity to tell the stories from those from the top of the industry to graduate students. I will share their insights and relay their experiences from issues such as, force majeure, returning to the stage, unionization, and unemployment. This project lays the foundation of understanding that is necessary to discuss the future of our industry and I would be pleased to discuss it at your conference.

Timothy Bostwick is a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in Performance and Literature with a cognate in Musicology. His dissertation, *The Nightingale's Voice: Exploring Jenny Lind as a Proto-feminist*, explores the famed singer as an example of a woman that transcended societal norms in Victorian England. He was also recently awarded the Kate Neal Kinley Fellowship and the Stotler Fellowship.

Additionally, as an avid performer, Mr. Bostwick, baritone, has been applauded as an "impressive and impactful voice" in *Hansel und Gretel* and described in his role as Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* as "Pure comic joy." Recent performances include; the titular roles, Falstaff and Gianni Schicchi, in addition, he is an avid recitalist including Wolf's *Italianisches Liederbuch*, an American Art Song recital, and Clara Schumann: *A Life Remembered*.