

## VOICE STUDY AT BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

The development of performance competence is considered to be of fundamental importance for each of the degree programs offered by the Department of Music. There can be no music without skilled and knowledgeable performers to produce it. Applied voice study is designed to give students high-level technical and musical skills to form the basis for artistic communication with others through teaching and performance.

### APPLIED VOICE STUDY

Each student studying voice will be expected to demonstrate consistent growth in vocal performance skills. This growth must be evident in the vocal technique, sound, quality of performance, musical proficiency and consistently rising difficulty level in repertoire requirements. In performance exams (juries) at the end of each semester, voice students perform selections from the repertoire they have studied that semester for the voice faculty.

### LEVELS

The following provides general guidelines to requirements for each level of applied voice study.

#### **MC 132 (2 credits) /134 (4 credits):**

Standard Old English, American Art Songs  
Basic Old Italian Songs of the 17th and 18th Centuries  
Folk Songs  
Second semester: add German Lieder for performance major

#### **MC 232 (2 credits) / 234 (4 credits):**

Basic Lieder: Franz, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms  
Intermediate Level Italian Art Songs  
Mozart or early operatic arias (for performance majors)

*In order to pass to Level 3, students must demonstrate ability to learn, memorize and perform enough repertoire for a 300-level recital (30 minutes). Students passing from Level 2 to 3 must also exhibit competency in the following areas;*

- a) breath management
- b) posture
- c) diction
- d) intonation
- e) evenness of vibrato
- f) well-balanced tone quality throughout range
- g) stage presence and deportment

*Performance majors must pass to Level 3 by their sixth semester of study in order to remain in the performance degree program.*

**MC 332 (2 credits) / 334 (4 credits):**

Basic French Literature: Faure, Duparc, Hahn, etc.  
Concert Arias: Handel, Mozart, Haydn, etc.  
Contemporary American Art Song Literature: Ives, Barber,  
    Rorem, etc.  
Advanced German Lieder: R. Strauss, Mahler, etc.  
Arias from Oratorio: Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn, etc.  
Arias from 18th Century Opera: Mozart  
Art Songs of all periods in languages other than those above  
Repertoire appropriate for a half recital program (Music Education, Music  
Business and General Music)

*In order to pass to Level 4, students must demonstrate ability to learn, memorize and perform enough repertoire for a 400-level recital (60 minutes). There must also be evidence of ongoing improvement in all areas required for advancement to 300-level. In addition, the following elements should be demonstrated:*

- a) understanding of legato and musical phrasing
- b) understanding of different musical styles
- c) understanding of recitative style (where applicable)
- d) accurate, competent diction in all repertoire performed
- e) appropriate physical expression of dramatic elements of text and music

**MC 432 (2 credits) / 434 (4 credits):**

Advanced German Lieder, French Melodies, Concert Arias,  
Opera and Oratorio Arias, and Contemporary Art Songs  
Repertoire appropriate for a Senior Performance level Recital Program

*Level 4 is required for vocal performance majors and optional for vocal music education majors.*

**GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REPERTOIRE REQUIREMENTS**

Students are expected to learn, memorize and perform all assigned repertoire. Failure to do so will result in a lowering of the semester grade. All assigned repertoire must be listed on the semester repertoire sheet. General guidelines for voice majors concerning the amount of repertoire studied each semester are as follows:

2 credits-minimum of four songs

4 credits-minimum of six songs

Final determinations regarding the amount and type of repertoire studied during each semester are dependent on each student's needs and abilities and will be determined by the studio teacher.

Students are encouraged to keep a listing of all repertoire studied each semester. Although this information is kept on file by the music department, this list will serve as

your personal record of your vocal work at Boise State. Such lists are often required to be part of graduate school applications.

All students should purchase copies of the music assigned by their teacher. There are numerous suppliers of vocal music from which you may order by phone. Ask your teacher for information.

### **LESSON ATTENDANCE AND REQUIREMENTS** -

Weekly lessons are scheduled on an individual basis in consultation with the voice teacher. Performance majors schedule one hour each week. Music Education majors, Bachelor of Arts students, musical theatre majors, voice minors and non-music majors schedule one half-hour lesson each week. Attendance at all lessons is mandatory unless illness or another emergency prevents your attendance.

You should not have a lesson if you are sneezing, coughing, running a fever, or otherwise in physical pain. Do not expose your teacher or other singers to colds, strep throat, bronchitis, etc. If you are ill, pick up the phone and communicate with your teacher.

**Remember that you are responsible for maintaining your energy and health through good nutrition, adequate sleep, and regular exercise.**

Students will attend all lessons and will practice according to the "Practice Guidelines" in this handbook. Be punctual and knock on your teacher's door at your lesson time.

3. Students will prepare new material for each lesson. This material may be assigned by the teacher or determined by the student. Normally, students are responsible for learning notes on their own. Lessons not adequately prepared may be terminated by the teacher. Failure to prepare adequately for lessons may indicate inability to solve musical problems, mismanagement of practice time, or disinterest. Consistent non-preparation may affect your grade and possibly your right to remain in the degree program.

4. **Lessons not cancelled by 9 a.m. on the day of your scheduled lesson will not be made up.** If the instructor is forced to miss a lesson, a make-up lesson will be scheduled.

### **END OF SEMESTER JURIES**

Each voice major (performance, music education, general music) will sing a jury in order for the voice faculty to evaluate student progress during each semester. The jury is your final exam in which you demonstrate the results of your semester's work. Vocal performance majors will sing three songs from memory, all others, two songs from memory. All students may choose the first piece they perform after which the voice faculty will choose from the submitted repertoire for the jury.

Sign-up sheets and information about juries are posted on the first-floor bulletin board approximately one week before finals week. Be sure to consult your accompanist when deciding on your jury time.

Repertoire sheet forms will be distributed by your teacher (or obtained from the Music Department Office), then reviewed and signed by your teacher after you have filled in the required information. Students must bring their repertoire sheets with them to juries.

A student will not be required to present an end of semester jury if he/she has given an elective (full or half) or degree recital during that semester.

### **STUDENT RECITALS**

Each student graduating with a degree in Music Performance with vocal emphasis will be required to present a senior recital. Performance majors must present a full-length (45-50 minutes of music) solo recital.

Music Education majors with vocal emphasis will be required to present a 30 minute senior recital.

Any student giving a recital must sing a pre-recital jury at least one month prior to the recital date. At the pre-recital jury, the voice faculty\* will evaluate the quality of the student's recital preparation and performance competency. The pre-recital jury is intended to ensure that the recital preparations are thorough and have taken place well in advance of the recital date. All recital music is to be memorized at the time of the pre-recital jury. The last month before the recital should be devoted to polishing performance details - not to memorizing music.

Music may not be added to a recital program once that program is approved at the pre-recital jury.

\*In addition to the full-time vocal-choral faculty hearing committee, students may invite other faculty members as necessary and appropriate.

### **RECITAL ETIQUETTE**

Recitals in an academic setting are intended as capstone experiences representative of your voice study in your academic program. They are a forum in which students demonstrate competency in the following; vocal technique, language diction, musicianship, knowledge of musical styles, artistry, and stage presence.

The recital stage is a professional setting in which the focus is on effective presentation of the music and demonstration of performance skills. In order to maintain a standard of professionalism that is uniform for all students giving recitals, the following guidelines for performance etiquette are in place:

- a) Stage decorations other than flowers are prohibited.
- b) Normal recital/concert hall lighting will be standard. Lighting embellishments are prohibited. They are not appropriate for the recital stage.

- c) Encourage friends and family to practice good audience etiquette. Applaud in the right places, no flash photography during the performance, minimize disturbances for the sake of the performers and other audience members, and refrain from coming to the stage at the end of the recital.
- d) If possible, recruit some ushers and ask them not to let late-comers into the hall during pieces or sets of music. It is distracting to performers and the already seated audience members.
- e) Thank you speeches to friends, teachers, family, etc. have no place on the concert stage. Save them for your post-recital celebration or make them more personal and enduring by writing to the people to whom you want to express gratitude. The stage is only for the music you are presenting! The music is what this is all about - and it is what you want your audience to remember.

### **SINGERS AND ACCOMPANISTS**

All voice students must have an accompanist by the fourth week of the semester. Consult with your teacher about finding a pianist who is willing and competent to collaborate with you. Finding such a pianist is worth your time, effort, and expense. Remember that a good pianist will enable you to make faster progress on your repertoire and free you to be more expressive.

Singers and pianists should rehearse at least one half-hour/week. This should be a regularly scheduled time. Both the singer and pianist should have the music thoroughly learned prior to these rehearsals. It is the singer's responsibility to see that the pianist has the music well ahead of time.

Pianists are to attend the singer's weekly lesson time. Material covered during lesson time should be thoroughly prepared in the rehearsals prior to the lesson.

The rules of common courtesy apply to missed lessons or rehearsal times. If either person knows that he/she cannot be present at a rehearsal or lesson, that person should notify the other as far in advance as possible. Singers should be prompt in paying accompanists and should expect to be billed by the accompanist for failure to provide timely notification of cancelled rehearsals, lessons, or performances.

The singer and the pianist are a team. Both should do everything possible to communicate clearly - both musically and professionally.

### **STUDIO ASSIGNMENTS**

Each student will choose or be assigned a voice teacher from among the members of the voice area faculty. Whenever possible and appropriate student preferences are honored when it comes to choosing a voice teacher. However, should a student's chosen teacher's studio be full, the student should contact Dr. Rushing-Raynes or another member of the voice area faculty for placement. Occasionally, there are cases when the voice area faculty may determine that a student should be moved to another teacher in order to best serve the needs of the individual student.

Should a student wish to change to another teacher, the request must be submitted **by e-mail** addressed to the student's current teacher **and** the teacher with whom the student is requesting to study. The request must state clearly the reason(s) the student wishes to change studios, emphasizing the pedagogical approaches and needs which serve as the basis for the request. The voice area faculty will consider the submitted request and determine #1) availability of space in other studio, and #2) the best course of action to ensure optimum vocal and musical growth for the student.

### **BASIC PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

Practice time should be approached with understanding and purpose. Many discoveries you will make about your voice will occur outside of your teacher's studio. It is your responsibility to bring these discoveries and observations about your voice to your teacher. The teacher will provide direction and guidance in order for you to better understand your own voice.

There are many possible practice plans available to you. Find out what works best for your stage of vocal development. Your teacher will assist you in finding warm-ups and technical exercises that are most effective and appropriate for you. You are encouraged to audio-tape your voice lessons and regular practice sessions.

REMEMBER - developing your best singing tone and good musicianship skills are your major goals. Preparing mentally, physically, and emotionally for each practice session will strengthen your musical sensitivities, talents, and gifts. Unfocused practice time is the enemy of your progress. The following are some ideas that will help you focus your practice time and maximize your results.

- ✓ Establish a routine. Set a regular practice time each day and put it in your class schedule. Developing consistent daily practice habits will promote optimum vocal growth.
- ✓ Stand tall and keep your entire body balanced. Be aware of tension that may interfere with your breath. Do not sit or accompany yourself at the piano!
- ✓ Begin with stretching and body warm-ups. Identify any areas of tension or fatigue and concentrate on gently stretching them. Take as long as you need in order to feel focused and energized for practice.
- ✓ Spend at least 15 minutes on the vocal exercises you and your teacher have developed. Always warm up!
- ✓ Work on your repertoire. Set a goal each day - Establish what you hope to accomplish before you begin your practice. This may include learning the notes, singing on pure vowels, polishing a difficult passage, pronunciation work, or memorizing.
- ✓ Problems? Write them down and take them to your next lesson.

## **ONLINE RESOURCES FOR SINGERS**

<http://www.tismusic.com/> - online music sales

<http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/> - song text translations

<http://www.aria-database.com/> - information about opera plots, aria translations

<http://www.classicalvocalrep.com/> - online music sales

<http://www.singershealth.com/> - information about vocal health

<http://www.nats.org/> - National Association of Teachers of Singing official website

<http://www.classicalsinger.com/> - information on pursuing professional singing careers

<http://www.acda.com/> - American Choral Directors Association official website

<http://www.voicefoundation.org/> - everything you want to know about voice care

## **CARE OF THE VOICE - VOCAL HYGIENE**

1. Try your best to maintain good general health. Sleep enough!!! Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, especially during cold and flu season.
2. Exercise regularly. It raises energy levels and diminishes stress.
3. Eat a balanced diet including lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods. Avoid large amounts of salt and refined sugar. Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol.
4. Maintain body hydration by drinking 7-9 glasses of water/day. Avoid known dietary diuretics such as caffeine and alcohol. Moisture lubricates the vocal folds. When one's body is dehydrated, laryngeal lubrication is reduced and vocal ability is diminished. Diuretics cause excess liquid to leave your body, thus contributing to dehydration.
5. Avoid low humidity. Since much body moisture is lost when breathing in air with low humidity levels (as in air-conditioned or heated rooms), it may be a good idea to purchase a humidifier for your room. Take care to keep the humidifier clean - free of dirt and micro-organisms so that it functions safely and doesn't contribute to the spread of illness.
6. Do not smoke ANYTHING! Period. Inhaled substances will damage your vocal tract in both the short and the long term. Avoid mind-altering drugs, especially those that are illegal. They damage your general mental and physical health - not to mention your voice!
7. Whenever possible, avoid breathing smoggy, polluted air (car exhaust, second-hand cigarette smoke, etc.)
8. Avoid the use of over-the-counter cold remedies containing anti-histamines. They are extremely drying to the vocal folds. If you need a decongestant or antihistamine, consult a physician to obtain a drug that does not excessively disturb the moisture balance in the vocal tract. Avoid the use of local anesthetic sore throat sprays or lozenges. Singing with a numbed throat is like trying to play the piano with gloves on. Consult your teacher or on-line resources for more information on medication.
9. Question the use of progesterone dominant birth control pills. They may cause a virilization of the female larynx and a loss in the upper vocal range. There may be no alternative for you, but consult with your doctor.

## **USING YOUR VOICE WITH CARE**

1. When singing or speaking in unusual ways (other than in quiet conversation) and in such circumstances as stage acting, public speaking, cheerleading, lecturing, etc., learn to use your voice with as little effort and tension as possible. Avoid hyper-functional use of your voice. Less is more if we think in terms of vocal longevity.
2. Avoid singing or speaking for excessive amounts of time. Keep in mind that voice use for long periods of time relates directly to the physical conditioning of the vocal muscles and also to the innate vocal capacity of the individual to endure wear and tear.
3. Avoid singing in a tessitura which is continually near the extreme ends of your own vocal range.
4. Before singing, always do vocal warm-ups. Exercises should begin with general muscle stretching and massaging, etc. and vocal exercises should proceed from less strenuous to more strenuous use of the muscles. Loud volume and high pitch are the most strenuous uses of the voice, so begin warm-ups by exercising the middle and low range first at a mp-mf dynamic range. Gradually introduce higher volume and pitches, taking care to maintain easy production and adequate breath energy. Before practicing, lessons, or rehearsals, a ten-minute warm-up is the absolute minimum.
5. Reduce general voice use (includes speaking) before performances. Think conservation.
6. Avoid shouting, screaming, loud laughter, and heavy throat clearing. Avoid talking with a scratchy or "gravel-like" quality. If your voice is scratchy because of a cold, talk less.
7. Hold down coughing and when sneezing, do it gently and non-vocally.
8. Avoid talking over loud noise - loud restaurants, athletic events, motor noise in planes, cars, buses, etc. Keep your vocal mileage as low as possible.
9. If your throat is sore, sing with caution, or don't sing at all.
10. Find ways to circumvent emotional stress. Anger, tension, sadness, frustration, etc. all cause us to use our voices less efficiently.
11. If it feels bad, don't do it.