

FROM THE STUDIO OF TORIN W. CHILES



STUDIO POLICIES, INFORMATION AND COURSE OUTLINE:

- Serious students of the Voice develop not just through disciplined daily practice; they also learn by listening to the masters of their craft AND by reading the important texts of their field. The following selective bibliography is meant to serve as a guide for undergraduate reading. These works contain a general outline of vocal technique and pedagogy; some of them also offer useful repertoire and vocal exercises. For more encyclopaedic pedagogy the following two books have been my cornerstone texts:

Miller, Richard. *The Structure of Singing*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1986. (MT825.M646 1986)

Stark, James. *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. (ML1460.S695 1999)

A Sample Undergraduate Reading List:

Shirlee Emmons and Stanley Sonntag. *The Art of the Song Recital*. New York: Schirmer Books, c1979.

Richard Miller. *On the Art of Singing*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Richard Miller. *Securing Baritone. Bass-Baritone and Bass Voices*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Richard Miller. *Solutions for Singers*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Richard Miller. *Training Soprano Voices*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Richard Miller. *Training Tenor Voices*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Joan Dornemann. *Complete preparation: a guide to auditioning for opera*. New York: Excalibur Pub., c1992.

Anthony Legge. *The art of auditioning: a handbook for singers, accompanists and coaches*. London: Rhinegold, 1988.

Thomas Hemsley. *Singing and imagination: a human approach to a great musical tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Shirlee Emmons. *Power performance for singers: transcending the barriers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Eloise Ristad. *A soprano in her head: right-side-up reflections on life and other performances*. Moab, Utah: Real People Press, c1982.

Lorraine Gorrell. *The nineteenth-century German lied*. Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, c1993.

More advanced students are expected to study some of the works in the studio *Selected Bibliography*. (see <http://publish.uwo.ca/~tchiles/bibliography.html>)

- We are very fortunate to have **Marianna Chibotar** and **Christina Willatt** for our studio's Collaborative Pianists. Ms. Chibotar's cell phone number 519-777-0252 is and her e-mail is mariannachibotar@gmail.com. Ms. Willatt's number is 519-615-0465 and her e-mail is cwillatt@alumni.uwo.ca. Please book their services for the second half of your one-hour lesson (or, for performance majors, for the full hour of your repertoire lessons), at *least* a half-hour rehearsal/coaching through the week (more, ideally, for performance majors and grad students) **and** for all your juries and recitals etc. Ms. Chibotar and Ms. Willatt are talented and experienced coaches, accompanists and *répétiteurs*. You will want to prepare your repertoire and diction with them and work with them as extensively as is financially feasible. Please note that the normal practice at Western is that **you are responsible for all financial arrangements and commitments with pianists throughout the year**.
- **My telephone number here in London is: 519-615-8258**. Please do not call after 9:30pm. ***I generally require at least 24 hours notice to re-schedule a lesson***. If you wake up in the morning and find that you are "under the weather" vocally, please call or text my cell phone number at 8:30am or call the studio phone through the day at the bottom of an hour to let me know and to reschedule the lesson. **The studio phone number is 661-2111 ex84323**. My e-mail address is tchiles@uwo.ca I will do my best to make up lessons through each term, but my hourly schedule through the week is densely packed, and therefore lessons may have to be rescheduled to the ends of the terms. Please ask to rebook missed lessons; they will be happily rescheduled up to the end of April.

**"No shows" are inconsiderate and unprofessional and they may not be re-scheduled.
Please note that the "professional hour" shall be construed as fifty minutes.**

- Please monitor the Studio Bulletin Board (the door of MB313) for announcements but I will use a Studio Facebook Group most frequently for these announcements and making arrangements. Please accept a friend request from me so that I can add you to that forum. I will certainly email as well – please ensure I have your address. This is an excellent forum for announcements and swapping lesson times and asking questions of your more experienced colleagues.
- We will have two Studio Recitals this year. Our first Studio Recital (**Tuesday Nov. 15th, 6pm in VKH**) will celebrate the tradition of **Parlour Songs**. Find a wonderful song from this wonderful era and genre – there may be a bit of movement and spoken lines involved! The second Studio Recital (**Wednesday February 14th, 6pm in VKH**) will feature YOUR collaborations with live composers. Find a text and a composer NOW and start crafting a gem that’s tailor-made for YOU... Given the date, it might be fun to have all ‘love songs’!

Please take careful note of the dates and invite your family and friends to these concerts — our studio has earned an exciting reputation for these shows!

- **I have booked a regular weekly Performance Class – venue and time delivered by email.** This class commences with each singer presenting a “party piece” so that we all get to meet each other vocally. I will then move into a phase where I “teach” in a Masterclass setting as the year begins. This will soon change into more “Performance Class” opportunities as the year unfolds. This lets each of you perform once a week if you choose, but certainly ***no less than once every two weeks***. It gives you a safe environment to have a first real performance of your Jury and Recital and Audition repertoire. *Please ensure that you sing at least one half of the total number of performance classes this year – this is the expectation for the course.*

The pleasure of your company is mandatory for the full duration of our studio Performance Class each week — even if you are not performing for the class that week.

- Performance Class (‘masterclass’) and Class Recital time slots should be treated as lesson times with regard to your responsibilities and cancellation procedures. You are welcome to invite guests and your colleagues from other studios to studio Performance Classes (and, indeed to any lesson). **I would also encourage you to attend the masterclasses of each of the other studios.** All music presented in Performance Class must be solidly memorized. Feel free to repeat repertoire several times throughout the year!
- Supplying your colleagues with photocopies of the text and translations of pieces that you sing for our studio Performance Class will enhance your performance for both you and your audience. Similarly, I expect you to prepare and present a PowerPoint Slideshow of translations and complimentary art to accompany your credit recitals but NOT your juries.
- **Away Dates and Credit Recital Booking:** I will NOT be away at inconvenient times this year, BUT please do not book your credit recitals or dress rehearsals on Thursday evenings or on Sundays. Please note also that I will be hearing many UG auditions on Saturdays, so, no Saturday recital bookings before the 4pm slot. Please coordinate booking recital dates closely with your pianists and with me – it’s complex! There is a Webpage outlining our [Recital Procedure](#) and the various deadlines as well as [Jury Requirements](#).

- For each piece of repertoire that you bring to a lesson with me, I expect you to have completed (before we work on the piece) a translation which includes an attempt at an IPA (or phonetic) rendering of the text, a word-for-word decryption and then a “poetic translation” underneath the original text. Here is a one-line example:

dove ma:j kwestamor dove spinzemi il pjanto su:o

Dove mai quest' amor, dove spinsemi il pianto suo?

Where ever this-love where drove-me the weeping her?

To what has my love and her weeping driven me?

- Students are encouraged to study the **International Phonetic Alphabet [IPA]**. There is rudimentary information (in the form of concise charts) in the appendices of all the Richard Miller book (above) but I also strongly recommend:

Wall, Joan. *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers*. Greenbank, Wahington: Pacific Isle Publishing, 2005. (MT883.W35 1989)

Moriarty, John. *Diction*. Boston: E.C. Schirmer Music Co., 1975. (MT872.M67)

Jensen, Karen. *Singer's Guide to the IPA [interactive multimedia]: A multimedia course in the international phonetic alphabet*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba. School of Music, [1998?] (MT883.S554 1998)

You can get your own copy of this excellent resource from:

Karen Jensen c/o

School of Music, University of Manitoba,

Winnipeg, MB

R3T 2N2

Kjensen@cc.UManitoba.ca

- It is a valuable pedagogical tool to make a **recording of each lesson**. Please do a full debriefing of these recordings after each lesson. It may be very useful to make notes as you study these recordings. I have a static webcam set up, but honestly cell phones make excellent and much better recordings these days!
- **Please ensure that you are dressed appropriately for our lessons**. You should be in clothing that allows free movement for stretching and bending but which is not so baggy that I can not monitor your breathing and alignment effectively. I may often be staring at your abdomen to monitor your Breath Management; please wear a top that will allow you to sing comfortably under this focused attention. Your footwear should also be chosen to facilitate productive singing alignment and groundedness.
- **I recommend that everyone keep a Singing Journal**. Use the journal to keep track of the vocalises that you use as you train your voice. Use it to jot down any observations or questions that may arise as you practise or even as you observe other singers or listen to recordings.
- **Examination material (Jury Repertoire) must be solidly memorised by the middle of February**. The sooner this material is learned and memorised the sooner we can work at polishing it and the more comfortable you will be during the exam period. *Try to get into a rhythm of learning a piece, coaching it and then performing it in our Performance Class on a two-week cycle.*

- **Students are expected to be “off book” for all repertoire sessions with me** and, ideally, for repertoire sessions with Ms. Chibotar and Ms. Willatt. The music and words must be firmly in your mouth and in your mind to facilitate meaningful coaching at the university level. Repertoire that you perform for Masterclasses, Performance Classes and Class Recitals must, of course, be solidly memorised.

Grading:

Please read very carefully the **Voice Jury/Recital Requirements** document, the **Department of Performance Studies Handbook** as well as the **Recital Procedure Page**. These documents outline what the Faculty of Music requires of you. These documents are found online:

<https://music.uwo.ca/departments/music-performance/juryRequirements/VOICE%20jury%20requirements.pdf>

and

<http://www.music.uwo.ca/departments/music-performance/handbook/credit-recitals.html>

and

<http://www.music.uwo.ca/departments/music-performance/handbook/index.html>

- Your Undergraduate Applied Music grade will be calculated in the following manner:

60% - Studio Work (lessons and the requirements outlined in this document.)

5% - Recital Cards and Reviews

25% - Jury (3rd and 4th year Performance is 20% Jury and 65% Studio)

10% - Performance Class and Class Recital participation

- Graduate Students:

80% Studio Work

15% Performance Class

5% Concert Reviews

- Here is a guide to the MINIMUM expectations regarding Undergraduate repertoire:

Performance Program:

First Year – 16 songs fully prepared and memorised

Second Year – 20 songs

Third Year – Short Recital plus 8 songs

Fourth Year – Full Recital plus 18 songs

Non-Performance Programs:

First Year – 12 songs fully prepared and memorised

Second Year – 16 songs

Third Year – 18 songs

Fourth Year – 20 songs

Graduate Program:

First Year – Recital plus 12 songs and involvement with UWOpera

Second Year – Recital plus 12 songs, audition arias and involvement with UWOpera

Please also take particular note of the accompanying Voice Division document that is rubric given to the faculty members who assess your jury and recital performances.

Note the criteria by which you will be evaluated.

- Repertoire should be chosen from various periods and styles and must include at least the four languages this faculty requires (English, German French and Italian). Please note that these are the **MINIMUM** requirements and that aspiring *performers* may strive to exceed this guideline. *Singers beginning studies with me must begin the year with Italian baroque repertoire – It's how I hear a voice and work on technique!*
- It may occasionally be necessary for me to re-schedule our regular lesson times. I will contact you personally should this happen, and we will find a mutually acceptable time to reschedule. **Please ensure that I have your most up-to-date telephone number, e-mail and other contact information.** Please check for e-mail from me and keep your UWO email inbox clear to receive email!
- Please take careful and frequent note of the instructions and notices posted along with the schedule on the bulletin board beside our studio door (MB313) and on our studio FB page. Please feel free to knock on the studio door to ask a question, to get some advice or just to chat; I know that you will be respectful both of your colleagues' and of my private clients' lesson times.

Torin

Important Information From the Registrar!

i) **Course Prerequisites: none.** Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

ii) **Grading scale:**

Undergraduate: A+=90-100%, A=80-89%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, D=50-59%, F=0-49%.

Graduate: A=80-100%, B=70-79%, C=60-69%, F=0-59%.

iii) **Academic Consideration for Student Absence & Missing Work (≥10%):** Students are responsible for making up any missed classes or assignments as soon as possible. The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. Academic Consideration provides students with consistent, fair, and pedagogically appropriate consideration, without compromising the academic integrity of the course or program, when they have been unable to complete some component of a course due to short-term extenuating circumstances. Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions (physical or mental) that may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities are directed to seek Academic Accommodation through Accessible Education ([Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)).

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the end of the period of absence covered, to the Academic Counselling unit or Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate (TC210), of the student's Home Faculty together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the academic consideration being requested. Students are directed to read the Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness at the following website for further details regarding various requirements and procedures for the supporting documentation: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf

Whenever possible, students who require academic consideration should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

iv) **Academic Consideration for Missing Work (<10%):** In cases where students miss work that is worth less than 10% of the total course grade (ie. two or fewer assignments / lessons, or equivalent in applied studio courses) due to medical illness or compassionate grounds, if documentation is voluntarily submitted to the Associate Dean's office and the Associate Dean grants an accommodation, then the missed assignment(s) or quiz(ze)s will be discounted in the calculation of the final grade for the course. If documentation is not voluntarily submitted then the missed assignment(s) will receive a grade of zero. Students who have been denied accommodation by an instructor may appeal this decision to the Associate Dean's office but will be required to present appropriate documentation.

v) **Academic Offences:** Submission of work with which you have received help from someone else (other than the course instructor or TA) is an example of plagiarism, which is considered a major academic offence. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, as found at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

vi) **Mental Health & Wellness:** Students that are in emotional/mental distress should refer to the Health and Wellness at Western page (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or to go to the Wellness Education Centre located in Thames Hall room 2170. **Students in crisis in need of immediate care are directed to go directly to Student Health Services in Thames Hall 2170 or to click on the big green "I Need Help Now" button on the Health and Wellness page above.**

vii) **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students work with Accessible Education which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

viii) **Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays (other than statutory holidays), and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. The Diversity Calendar from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion provides information on multifaith, multicultural and diversity related holidays and observances and links to resources for more information. <https://www.edi.uwo.ca/resources/2816-2023-Diversity-Calendar-PDF.pdf>

ix) **Contingency Plan:** Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, should any university-declared emergency require some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience), the course will adapt accordingly. The grading scheme will **not** change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

x) **Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:** Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, either recently or in the past, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca or call 519 661-3568.

xi) **Electronic Devices in Classrooms:** The in-class use of electronic devices (other than for instructor-approved in-class uses) is expressly prohibited. Students found guilty of disrupting the class with electronic devices will be asked to leave the class and may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

xii) **Online Etiquette:** Some components of this course may involve synchronous online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please observe the following general considerations of "netiquette":

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of "Zoom-bombing" a class, or of other serious online offenses, may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

General Philosophy and Advice...

- You will be your own best teacher throughout your life. I want to teach you how to teach yourself! You will, of course, always need professional “ears” to help you and guide you but you are the master of your vocal destiny.
- I generally spend the first half of the lesson working on purely technical aspects of your voice. This is where we will explore and develop your voice and where you will begin to learn how to teach yourself. In the second half of the lesson we will apply those technical concepts to the repertoire. You will want to have your accompanist with you for the second half of your lesson.
- Practise! Our art is all about muscular co-ordination and development. Singers may not be able, physically, to practice on their instrument for 6 hours a day as a pianist or violinist might but we can “practise” through various important preparatory activities, such as: study of the text and translation, listening to recordings, reading secondary material, repertoire search, keyboard practice... (NB: The ability to play the piano is an invaluable asset as you search for repertoire and as you learn your music!)
- Use the library well. Listen to recordings to seek out repertoire, to learn a sense of idiomatic style and performance practice. It is our intellect and preparation that transforms what we do from craft into art.
- Preparing repertoire at the university level should be challenging! You will need a personal translation (literal, poetic and IPA). You need to memorize the poem, then the music. You need to coach your repertoire then you need to perform it, put it away and then finally bring it out again for presentation — thus, the advantage of choosing and learning your repertoire very early in the year.
- Repertoire — I could just assign repertoire to each student, but the search for and the choosing of repertoire is an incredibly important part of what you need to learn here. So, I would like you to bring repertoire choices to me. I am happy to offer advice but that is all. You have many excellent resources to aid you in your quest: anthologies and collections, books in the library that outline repertoire for various voice types at various stages of vocal development, Lisa Philpot, vocal coaches, recordings of recitals by singers whom you respect, recitals by colleagues...

“Contrary to what you might believe, merely doing your job every day doesn’t qualify as real practice. Going to meetings isn’t practicing your people skills, and replying to email isn’t practicing your typing. You have to set aside some time and do focused practice in order to get better at something.”

– Steve Yegge



A Singers’ Kata

1. Talk to other singers. Listen to performances and recordings. This is more important than any book or training course.
2. Sing! The best kind of learning is learning by doing.
3. Take singing lessons from a challenging teacher.
4. Seek out and work on projects with good singers and players. Find out what it means to be the best.
5. Work on pieces that have been recorded by great singers. Learn how they accomplished what they did. Learn how to perform so other people can understand and follow your artistic ideas.
6. Sing in different styles and languages. Pick genres that have aesthetics and conventions that are unlike what you are used to.
7. Understand how your body affects what you do. Know how long it takes your voice to warm up; how long you need to recover from a hard day or week of singing; how long you can sing day after day without extra rest; and how long it takes to recover from illness.

GUIDELINES FOR JURORS MARKING UNDERGRADUATE VOICE RECITALS AND JURY EXAMINATIONS

- **90-100%** Marks at the A+ level reflect performances that demonstrate highly advanced, technically solid, artistic, expressive singing with a consistent and thorough understanding of the text and music and superb performance skills. These marks should be rare and are indicated when the performance ceases to be heard as an exam. Reserve this for outstanding performances.
- **85-88%** (NB avoid 89%) reflects a performance of considerable polish, with secure technique and intonation, expressive singing, thoughtful understanding of the text and music and excellent performing skills.
- **80-84%** represents a performance which is well prepared, delivered with confidence and generally successful technique. Performances at this level should demonstrate a good understanding of the text and music with some evidence of flair and imagination.
- **73-78%** (NB avoid 79%) Marks in this range represent a good, well prepared performance delivered with a certain degree of assurance and some understanding of the text and music. Technique in this range may be successful but not yet consistent.
- **65-72%** Marks in this range are used for performances that fulfill the requirements but which do not demonstrate successful technical development. Understanding of text and musical ideas may be immature at this level and only limited performance skills may be demonstrated.
- Marks below **64%** are used for performances that show limited awareness of voice study and performance skills. Performances in this range may be full of mistakes and not solidly prepared. The connection to text and understanding of musical elements are rudimentary.