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Handbook Purpose

This handbook serves as an addendum to the School of Music Student Handbook. It has important information specific to the voice area and important forms in the appendix. This handbook also serves as an addendum to the individual voice professor’s syllabus, which may differ from professor to professor. As a student at Texas State School of Music, you are responsible for any and all information found in this Handbook, the School of Music Handbook and the individual syllabus. Keep all three handy throughout your time with us, and refer to them often.

Faculty Contact Information (Alphabetical)

Brigitte Bellini            bb36@txstate.edu  (512) 245-8618  112 Music
Cary Michaels              cf13@txstate.edu  (512) 245-3388  110 Music
Dr. Samuel Mungo           sm58@txstate.edu  (512) 245-3046  108 Music
Cheryl Parrish             cp23@txstate.edu  (512) 245-3380  105 Music
Ron Ulen, Coordinator      ru11@txstate.edu  (512) 245-3392  206 Music
Dr. Soon Cho               scd55@txstate.edu  (512) 245-8369  106 Music
Dr. Oliver Worthington     ow12@txstate.edu  (512) 245-2651  102 Music

Academic Advisors

Every student in the Voice Area is assigned to an academic advisor. It is the responsibility of your advisor to guide and assist you as you plan your schedule for each semester. Your advisor can also be a valuable resource as you make decisions about your studies and the career you are intending to pursue. You may call upon your advisor for help at any time.

The pursuit of a music degree is a demanding endeavor. You should think of your advisor as your advocate in a process that can too often become complicated and strenuous for everyone involved. Should you feel at any time that you need additional assistance you are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the Voice Area Coordinator. Contact information for these advisors are:

Dr. Al Corley, Grad        ac44@txstate.edu  (512) 245-2651  109 Music
Debra Sowards, Undergrad   dgsowards@txstate.edu  (512) 245-1932  110 Old Main
Applied Voice Lessons

Applied Voice Lessons are individual lessons with you, your voice professor and your accompanist. Voice lessons focus on technique, musicality, literature and performance.

It is a Voice Area policy that attendance and punctuality are mandatory for all classes. Any unexcused absence will automatically result in the dropping of your grade. If you are going to miss a lesson, whether excused or unexcused, you must notify your professor as soon as you become aware of this absence. Notification after the fact will count as an unexcused absence. Two absences without notification will result in a grade of failure and the student then must audition again for placement in a Voice Studio and for the school of music. It is at the discretion of the professor whether or not an absence is excused or unexcused. It is also the professor's decision whether or not an unexcused absence (or missed voice lesson) will be made up. Your course syllabus for each class will explain each professor's individual policy in this area.

In addition to the Voice Seminar, explained below, this class lesson time is individually scheduled, and you are responsible for contacting your voice professor to schedule your lesson. Both you and your accompanist must have this time free, so coordinate with them as well. This needs to be done before the first day of class. If you are unsure of your Applied Professor, please contact the Voice Area Coordinator.

Voice Seminar

A voice studio is comprised of all of the private students whom a particular Voice Professor teaches. The Voice Professor has a set time to meet for one and a half hours each and every week, outside of lessons in their studio. This time is generally what you will see on your schedule under time for Studio Voice. This meeting is called Voice Seminar. Attendance is mandatory for all voice students, regardless of Major. Your professor's syllabus will inform you of your particular meeting time and day. The purpose of the Voice Seminar is to provide the student with performance experience and feedback.

Accompanists

All students in Applied Voice are required to hire an accompanist for their voice lessons. Your professor will receive a list of accompanists from the piano department at the beginning of the semester. This list will also be posted on the Voice/Opera Callboard at the beginning of the semester. Your professor may also recommend a particular accompanist for you to contact. The accompanist will play for a ½ hour of lesson time, a ½ hour of rehearsal time each week, when you are scheduled to sing in Seminar, and for your Final Jury. Accompanist fees vary. You and the accompanist will be required to sign an Accompanist Contract for the semester; you can find one in the appendix or online at: http://www.music.txstate.edu/voice.
Voice Area Recitals

Voice Faculty Recitals are mandatory for all Voice Majors, unless written permission is received from your Applied Voice Professor before the recital. Since attendance at a given number of recitals is required for Convo, we encourage you to go to as many Voice recitals as possible. This will not only support the performer by your attendance but will give you a chance to learn performance practice for your instrument. Your Voice Professor may very well require you to go to all the recitals of the Studio, if not the whole Area. Check your syllabus for specifics.

Voice Studio Placement

Choosing a Voice Teacher to guide you technically through your 4 years deserves careful consideration: At Texas State we try to make it as easy as possible. All of our Voice Professors in the School of Music are proven professionals with years of success, so you can't go wrong with any choice. Following the steps below will make the process an easy one.

Students who are in need of Applied Voice studio placement must fill out a Studio Request Form, available from your Advisor. The form asks you to provide your choices of three possible professors, ranked in order of preference. Writing in less than three choices will nullify the form. This form will be used as the Faculty to determine studio placement at the beginning of the semester.

Determining your choice. You will find bios of each Voice Professor online at www.music.txstate.edu/voice/faculty/voice.html. Contacting the Voice Professors is your responsibility. The Voice faculty is willing to talk with you personally to discuss ways in which they teach and ways in which they can help you personally attain your musical and educational goals. Ask them for time to meet to discuss with them their ideas on voice, on teaching, pedagogy, etc. You will want to get a feel not only of the technique they teach, but also for how they teach and how you feel your personalities match. Try to find the teacher who best teaches the way you feel you can learn. A great vocal technique is lost on a student who does not respond to that specific teacher. Ask current and former students, as they have first hand knowledge as well.

Changing Studios

Students remain with a particular Voice Professor throughout their time here at Texas State. The Voice Professor knows the student, and vice-versa. The Voice Professor is aware of the needs of the student technically and thus is best suited to guide them, and changing studios can be very disruptive to the student’s vocal growth. Sometimes, however, the way a Voice Professor teaches may not get through to the student in a successful way. While all of our teachers give much the same information, each does it in a different way, and sometimes hearing it differently can lead to success for the student. If
this becomes the case, you may request to change to a teacher who may speak a “language” you understand better. Your School of Music Student Handbook addresses Change of Studio in the Studio Teacher Assignments and Changes section. The following procedure for changing studios is an addendum to that policy.

1. **Do not listen to gossip.** Opinion is individual. Every voice student thinks their voice teacher is the best one; that is why they are in that studio! This comes from the fact that the student and teacher have a good learning relationship. The student practices and learns from others, and feels good about what they are learning. A great way to determine who may meet your needs is to ask fellow students to name someone besides their own teacher they would recommend. This will often lead to a more honest opinion.

2. **Your first step is to discuss your issue with your current teacher.** Most of the time an open discussion of issues reveals opportunity to succeed, and frank discussion thus leads to success in the studio. Do not be afraid to discuss with your teacher your needs and desires, as these are often one and the same as the wishes of the teacher. Most often this leads to students staying in a studio, and a better, stronger teacher-student relationship.

3. **If, after discussion,** it is still felt that a change is in order, the student must communicate this to the teacher, and contact the Voice Area Coordinator. The student is then free to contact other teachers, and return to the process described above in Choosing a Voice Teacher.

**To reiterate, you must express the desire to change studios with your current teacher first.** Neither the Coordinator of Voice nor any other Voice Professor can help you with this process until communication with your current professor has taken place.

**Dropping a class**

If in the earliest part of the semester you realize you will not get a satisfactory grade, you may drop a class. See [http://www.registrar.txstate.edu/registration/drop-a-class.html](http://www.registrar.txstate.edu/registration/drop-a-class.html) for more information.

In 2007, the Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill 1231 which provides that, except for several specific instances of good cause, undergraduate students entering as first time freshmen at a Texas public institution of higher education in the fall of 2007 or later will be limited to a total of **six dropped courses** during their undergraduate career. Staying on task in theory, aural and piano class is essential to the student’s success in any of the music degrees.
Juries

Juries are required of all voice students with the exception of those giving a recital during the given semester. A jury is part of your final exam for Applied Voice lessons.

The following are the minimum number of songs required for the Jury for each level of Voice per Major, and the respective number of languages. Each Professor requires a different amount of material necessary to successfully complete their Course. Please consult the Syllabus your Professor will provide to you:

SRT= Sound Recording Technology; MT= Musical Theatre; NM= Non-major

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3*</td>
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<td>6, 4</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>6, 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 4+</td>
<td>8, 4, aria</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>6, 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>8 songs, 4 languages, 2 arias for each semester</td>
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*Junior and Senior recitals take the place of a jury for that semester  ** Not in Studio Voice
+ This will apply for all subsequent semesters as well

A schedule will go up the week before Final Exam week. The schedule is set up according to accompanist. You will need to sign up for a time slot where your accompanist has been scheduled. Please provide 8 copies of your filled out Jury Form, found on the website or in the appendix here.

You will present music that you have prepared during the semester to all of the members of the voice faculty. See the appendix for a particular semester’s music requirements. The faculty will give an individual grade and offer constructive critiques for that performance. For one-credit hour lessons, the panel will pick a song for you to sing. For 2+ credit hours, you will present your choice of 1 song and the panel will then pick from your list. Once a piece has been offered for a Jury, it may NOT be offered for a subsequent jury.

Upper Level Juries

An Upper Level jury is an opportunity to prove your work and dedication to your chosen degree plan. Passing the Upper Level process allows you to register for Upper Level courses needed to graduate with a degree from the School of Music. This examination should not be taken lightly and will determine whether or not you will continue in your chosen degree plan. If voice is not your main instrument, please consider the challenges you will face in taking this exam. Your Voice Professor can speak candidly with you as to their opinion of the progress that will be needed for you to pass as well as challenges that may keep you from passing.
The Upper Level Performance Jury is one portion of this process, albeit an important one. This is your opportunity to prove to the faculty that you are progressing vocally and therefore should continue in voice. If you fail your Upper Level Performance Jury, you will not pass your overall Upper Level Competence Review, and will either be deferred or failed at the discretion of the Upper Level Review Committee.

The process is similar to a regular jury, however you will sign up for TWO slots on the Jury Schedule, and you will sing as many pieces as the faculty deem necessary to fairly evaluate your progress. It is important to note that this is a pass/fail grade and does not take into account previous juries. There are specific indications of vocal progress such as language proficiency, musicianship (i.e. intonation, pitch accuracy, rhythmic accuracy, etc.), vocal technique, artistry, and memory that must be achieved in this performance in order to pass. Your voice professor will address these features throughout your private study.

Learn more about the Upper Level competency review in your School of Music Student Handbook.

**Recitals**

A formal recital is partial fulfillment of certain majors Degree Plan in the School of Music.

**Performance Majors**
- In your Junior year, you will give a ½ hour Junior Recital of music in 4 languages. You may combine your Recital with another student’s ½ hour Recital if desired, to make a one hour performance.
- In your Senior year, you will give a one hour Senior Recital; if you showed proficiency in 4 languages in your Junior Recital, you may at the discretion of your Voice Professor sing a longer cycle of songs (such as Frauenliebe und Leben, Die Schöne Müllerin, etc.) and omit languages in the service of time.

**Music Education Majors**
- In your Senior year, you will give a ½ hour Senior Recital of music in 4 languages. You may combine your Recital with another student’s ½ hour Recital if desired, to make a one hour performance.
- At the discretion of your Voice Professor, you may elect to conduct one piece of choral music in lieu of singing.
- You may sing pieces from previous semesters, recitals or juries.

A new tool is now available to students giving required recitals this semester:

- Go to the School of Music homepage [http://www.music.txstate.edu](http://www.music.txstate.edu)
- Hover over the Resources tab (top right side of page)
- Click on “School of Music Student Recital Checklist”
You will see a list of sequential steps (with links) that recitalists need to follow. There are links on this page to the Student Handbook, Reservation Calendar, Reservation forms for the Recital Hall and Evans, Faculty Signature Form, and a Template for Student Recital Programs.

Also, the “Required Recital Evaluation Form” is now also posted under “Resources”. For your convenience, this form can be found in the appendix of this handbook. In the Main Office, Mrs. Harris has also printed some hard copies of the form and made them available in both her office and in the Recording Booth of the Recital Hall.

Recital Hearings

All students giving a formal recital must have a Pre-Recital Hearing. It is very important to schedule your hearing at least 2 weeks prior to your scheduled Recital. At this hearing you will have all of your recital music prepared and ready for professional performance. All aspects of the recital will be offered at the hearing, including guest artists, instruments, or choirs. Anything that is not offered in the hearing will not be allowed on the Recital.

At this hearing, a panel of voice professors will determine your recital’s readiness. Make sure to make 8 copies of your program and fill out one copy of the Voice Hearing Form provided online or in the appendix.

If the panel feels you are not ready, you will be given the opportunity to sing at a subsequent hearing. If a successful hearing cannot be accomplished one week prior to the recital, you will be asked to re-schedule your recital.

Time Management

At Texas State University and the School of Music, students will find many opportunities for involvement that will pique their interest. From clubs and Greek Organizations to ensembles and chances to sing at various events, possibilities abound. While you are encouraged to enjoy your time here, these things must never become an excuse for failing to meet your academic responsibilities. This includes attendance and preparation at all classes and lessons. The following guidelines are intended to assure that students have ample time to devote to their studies:

- **MAKE TIME TO STUDY, and MAKE TIME TO PRACTICE.** This time is not on your schedule of classes, so it is up to you to create the time needed to complete the work assigned in your classes. A great idea is to actually write it into your daily schedule, as if these times were classes. Providing that structure to these activities will make it easier to succeed.

- Performance opportunities are an important part of your education. As a singer, you will be offered many opportunities to become part of many ensembles and performances. While you may be interested, or feel compelled to get involved in many, you must remember that you are a student first! Freshmen are highly discouraged from becoming involved in more than one
ensemble the first semester. If you feel you can take on a second ensemble in the Spring, seek the advice of your professors beforehand.

- Becoming involved in the Greek Organizations is an excellent way to form relationships with fellow students, and many students find a home away from home with their organization. These organizations do ask for extensive time, however, and you should consider the time needed for your classes and grades before you Rush.

- It is the student’s responsibility to examine any Ensemble rehearsal schedule and schedule of classes and to inform the Ensemble Director of any and all conflicts with regular classes.

- When attending college, many students find themselves on their own for the first time. This new-found freedom can be exhilarating, but comes with responsibilities. Always remember that you are here to earn a Music Degree. Learning social skills in this environment is an important aspect of the college experience, but never forget that classes come first.

**Vocal Health**

You are a singer. This means that your instrument is not in a case, to be put together for rehearsals and then put away in your room until you need it again. Your instrument is YOU. Your entire body is what you use to create the music. It is your responsibility to care for your instrument. Well cared for, your instrument should last a lifetime!

What is Vocal Health? This means getting enough rest (8 hours+), frequent hand washing, eating right, exercising, drinking lots of water to stay hydrated and monitoring vocal fatigue in extended rehearsals. This is enormously important lesson to learn as a “Human Instrument”!! Remember, if you can’t sing in your lesson, you can’t receive a grade for that day and your final grade will suffer.

Occasionally, you may need to mark during rehearsals to prevent vocal fatigue and possible damage. You should confirm your request to mark with your director prior to rehearsal. Just your being able to sing during your lessons is related to a passing grade, so is your ability to participate and contribute during rehearsals. For a more detailed definition of marking, please refer to "The Technique of Marking" chapter in Richard Miller’s On the art of Singing. A copy of this chapter can be found in the appendix of this handbook.

**Rehearsal and Performance Conflicts**

Performance and rehearsal conflicts either inside or outside of the School of Music are not excuses to miss a class. Arrangements to accommodate such commitments must be made with each individual professor, and the decision whether or not to accommodate is up to the professor. This includes permission to arrive late to a class or leave early.
Rehearsal and Performance Etiquette

The Professors, Ensemble Directors and staff- whether Guests or Faculty- are, in addition to educators, working professionals. Their careers are the result of years of training and performance experience. Throughout the rehearsal process they are expected to treat you like a professional. You- as an essential part of your own training-are expected to treat them in the same manner. Professional behavior requires your presence, punctuality, courtesy, the learning of assigned material in a timely manner, and the demonstration of your serious commitment to the process.

*It is a brutal but undeniable fact of our industry that an individual singer is- except in the rarest of cases- both expendable and replaceable. A student who does not exhibit professional behavior at all times will- at the sole discretion of the Professor and/or Ensemble Director and the Director of the School of Music- be fired or replaced, and any grade adjusted accordingly.*

Dress Code

At Texas State there is a Dress Code for any and all performances. Juries, Seminars, Recitals, and Masterclasses are all considered performances and thus require proper dress. At these and similar events, professional attire is expected and required.

For Choral and Opera Performances you will have a specific costume, but for all other performances you will need to provide your own attire.

For men, professional attire includes slacks, buttoned shirts with collar, dress shoes, suits, jackets, or ties. For women, blouses, knee length skirts or dresses, slacks, suits, and dress shoes with heels no higher than 3 inches.

*Dressing don'ts*: FlipFlops, athletic shoes, shorts, jeans, t-shirts, hats, overly revealing clothing, heels higher than 3 inches or platforms. Remember, in these situations it is important to allow the listener the opportunity to enjoy your performance; clothing that distracts from this is to be avoided.

Grades

Grades are a form of communication. They are the manner by which a professor tells both you and the University the degree to which you have satisfied the requirements of a particular course. Texas State University gives only A, B, C, D and F, meaning no plus or minus grades for the final grade for the course.

Should you not finish assigned work in a particular course under extenuating circumstances, or should you leave before the end of the term, the professor has the option of giving a grade of “incomplete”. The grade will be either I-P or I-F, meaning that, had a grade been given on the day you left the class or the assigned work unfinished, you would
have been either passing the class or failing it. You will have one year to satisfy the requirements.

**Choral/Opera Ensembles**

The voice faculty encourages participation in choral/opera ensembles. An Ensemble allows you to implement your technique and musical expression in a safe and structured environment. Please let your Voice Professor know all of the Ensembles in which you are participating, on-campus as well as off-campus. It may be vocally beneficial to have more ensemble participation or to have less ensemble participation. Consult with your Voice Professor if you have any questions about your individual participation in Ensembles.

Please remember that you are required to be in Major Ensemble every semester you are enrolled in Applied Voice. Music Education Majors must complete 7 semesters of Ensemble, and Voice Performance Majors 8 semesters. Additionally, all Performance Majors and Scholarships recipients are required to audition for all Texas State Opera Theatre productions.

**Music**

There is a plethora of resources to find vocal music but we must insist that you follow the copyright laws. These can get quite tricky. It will behoove you to understand these laws (title 17). You can certainly make use of public domain music but it is your responsibility to know if it is actually in the public domain. Much of your music can be found in the library. If you cannot find it there, please fill out a card requesting it for future students to find. There are also several places on the internet to find and buy your music. Cultivating a personal library is very beneficial. Many teachers suggest at least one anthology a semester. Consult with your voice professor to ascertain the best anthologies for your personal library.

**Syllabus**

Each class at Texas State University is required to offer a syllabus, either on paper or online. A syllabus tells you all you need to know about the given course, including schedules, requirements, books needed, policies of the classroom, professor office hours and contact, objectives, grading. **Once you receive a syllabus, or are told where to find it online, you are responsible for any and all the information found in it.** Assignment due dates, exam schedules, attendance policies, etc. are the responsibility of the student. The syllabus is your roadmap for the class; refer to it at least twice a week to be sure you are on track.
Voice/Opera Callboard

The Callboard for the Voice Area is found on the first floor of the Music Building next to room 108. On this Callboard you will find announcements regarding auditions, classes, opportunities, or the Voice Area in general. Make it a habit to check this Callboard regularly.

Communication

In order to communicate effectively with all of you throughout the academic and calendar year, the School of Music maintains an up-to-date database for all Music Majors. You are asked to provide current and accurate contact information at the beginning of the year, and it is important that you update this information whenever anything changes. Make certain that we have a current address and phone number.

Communication through a non-Texas State email address is prohibited by state law. While information will go up on the Callboard, it is imperative that you check your Texas State email at least twice during the school day, in order to stay abreast of any class, rehearsal or other changes. You are responsible for any communication emailed to you from the University, School of Music or your professors.

Course Evaluations

Your professors will hand out Course Evaluation forms at the end of each semester. These evaluations provide you with the opportunity to communicate likes and dislikes about that particular course, instructor or classroom. Both the School of Music and the University treat these Course Evaluations very seriously, and so should you. Take the time to provide clear and constructive feedback.

Recommendation Letters

Many graduate schools and employers want recommendations letters from your applied voice professor. Ask your voice professor what makes them write a stellar letter for a student and follow those guidelines to ensure a stellar letter for your own performance.