

VOICE

General Remarks

Since its founding, Westminster Choir College has made a unique contribution to the world of music because of its emphasis upon vocal training. All undergraduates are required to study voice in order to become well grounded in the fundamentals of singing. Many graduate students also study voice as a major, primary, or elective.

The Performance Studies Department seeks to develop the musician by establishing a sound vocal technique and a thorough understanding of the singing voice, its literature, and pedagogy. These tools are essential for the study and performance of vocal and choral literature and for training students as solo performers, professional teachers, or choral conductors. Every undergraduate must satisfy departmental requirements for graduation. Juries and other tests are conducted periodically for the purpose of evaluating progress; details may be obtained from the Voice Department.

Voice Primary: Undergraduate

Voice primary students majoring in Sacred Music, Music Education, Theory/Composition, Music Theater, or the Bachelor of Arts in Music receive instruction which includes private lessons, diction, vocal pedagogy, voice literature and recitals. Weekly studio and performance classes offer regular performing opportunities.

Voice Major: Undergraduate

Instruction for Voice Performance majors entails private lessons, coaching, recitals, diction, voice literature, opera, and vocal pedagogy. Weekly studio and performance classes offer regular performing opportunities.

Voice Performance Repertoire List

(This requirement is effective as of the Fall 2010 semester for all students who entered or were readmitted into the Bachelor of Music, Voice Performance major for Fall 2008 or later.)

Students will document and present a Voice Performance Repertoire List demonstrating that they have satisfied the repertoire requirements stated in the Voice Handbook. The completed Voice Performance Repertoire List, signed by the voice teacher, must be submitted to the Academic Coordinator, along with documentation of the senior recital. Failure to complete the requirements of the Voice Performance Repertoire List will result in failure to graduate.

Secondary Voice: Undergraduate

Organ and piano primary students are required to study voice as a secondary applied field until they pass the Voice Proficiency Test. The test may be passed at the end of any semester, but those who do not pass it after four semesters of instruction are required to continue study until the test is passed. If the test is passed in fewer than four semesters, further voice secondary study is not required. Instruction includes class and private lessons as well as optional diction and vocal pedagogy courses. Qualified students may sing in performance classes at the discretion of their teachers or may request departmental approval to present voice recitals.

Voice Pedagogy and Performance Major: Graduate

Students are provided with rich experiences including private lessons, voice literature, opera, performance-based classes, voice pedagogy, voice teaching methods and a full recital. For students whose undergraduate work has not included a public recital, presentation of a 30-minute recital is required before work on the graduate recital may begin. Studio and performance classes offer frequent performance opportunities. Two fully-staged operas, one with orchestra, are presented each year. Private vocal coaching is available (fee is charged).

Please see the Voice Handbook for language requirements.

Voice Primary: Graduate

Graduate students majoring in Sacred Music may study voice as a primary instrument. The program culminates in a graduate recital of 30 to 50 minutes of singing. Weekly studio and performance classes offer frequent performance opportunities. Students in other graduate programs may take piano as an elective or toward their focus area.

Voice as an Elective

Undergraduate and graduate students may elect to study voice for credit toward their degrees if it is not otherwise a specific requirement. Instruction is in the form of private lessons and an extra tuition fee is assessed. There are no specific entrance or jury requirements. Elective lessons are provided on a space-available basis to qualified students.

Voice Performance Class

Attendance and participation at weekly studio and performance classes is required for all voice primary students. All Westminster students are invited to attend. The class functions primarily to provide performance opportunities, to acquaint students with a wide variety of vocal literature, and to equip them to teach voice to others.

Master of Voice Pedagogy (M.V.P.)

The Master of Voice Pedagogy program is designed for summer study. It includes courses in vocal pedagogy and literature, music core courses, and choral ensemble participation. The program culminates in a vocal pedagogy project completed under the guidance of a Westminster voice faculty member.

Presser Voice Laboratory

The Presser Voice Laboratory at Westminster is a state-of-the-art lab for voice analysis and research. It is used as a tool for students and their teachers to work interactively with visual and acoustical feedback, and for them to engage in individual research interests. Open Lab Days encourage everyone at Westminster to explore the lab's technology, and classes routinely work on lab assignments there to gain knowledge and experience in voice science.

Laboratory equipment includes KayPENTAX's Computerized Speech Laboratory (CSL), the Phonatory Aerodynamic System (PAS) for airflow analysis, VoceVista software and electroglottograph, and professional-quality microphones, recorders, and sound level meters. Various models and teaching aids are also housed in the lab, and the Talbott Library collaborates with the Presser Lab to provide access to books, journals, recordings, and Visible body software.

Faculty

Margaret Cusack • Professor, Voice, and Chair of Performance Studies, 1994. B.M., M.M.T., Oberlin College.

Christopher Arneson • Professor, Voice, 2003. B.A., M.M., Binghamton University; D.M.A., Rutgers University.

Susan S. Ashbaker • Associate Professor, Voice, 2006. B.M., M.M., Southern Illinois University; M.M., University of Illinois.

Elem Eley • Professor Emeritus, Voice, 1987. B.M., Baylor University; M.M., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Thomas Faracco • Associate Professor Emeritus, Voice. 1983. B.M., M.M., Westminster Choir College of Rider University.

Sean McCarther • Associate Professor, Voice, 2012. B.M., Baylor University; M.M., D.M., Indiana University.

Kathy Kessler Price • Professor, Voice, 2012. B.A., University of Richmond; M.M., University of Maryland; Ph.D., University of Kansas, Lawrence.