



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of TEACHERS of SINGING

inter nos

VOL. 57, NO. 1 • Spring 2024

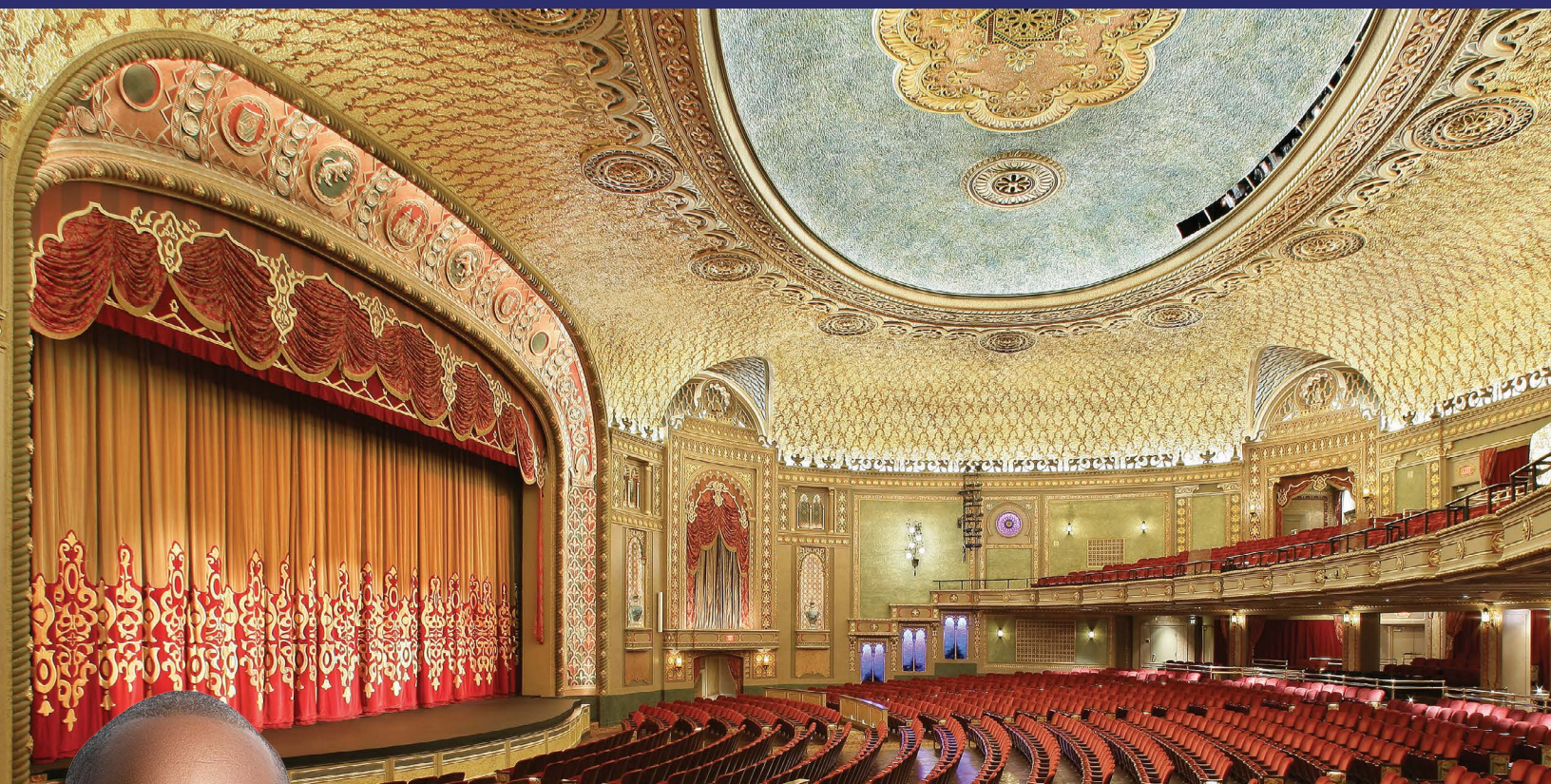
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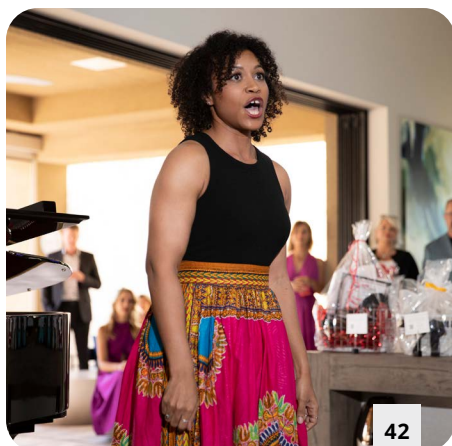
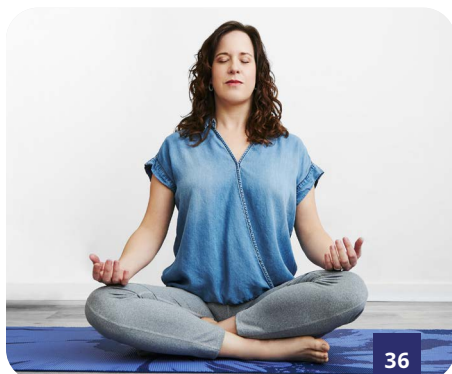
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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of TEACHERS of SINGING

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80

YEARS

Established March 23, 1944.

World's largest association of professional
voice teachers and collaborators.

TRANSFORMING LIVES
THROUGH THE
POWER OF SINGING.

inter nos

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Milestones

By Allen Henderson, NATS Executive Director

Happy 80th, NATS!

Happy Birthday to NATS! On Saturday, March 23, 2024, NATS celebrates its 80th birthday. I doubt that our founders, when they met to officially form the National Association of Teachers of Singing in 1944, envisioned the diverse organization we are today. With members throughout North America, in over 30 countries, 15 regions, and comprising more than 80 chapters, NATS and its members have influenced countless teachers and singers throughout its history. Some of us “grew up” in NATS, others of us are brand new to the association. No matter how long or short your association with NATS, we welcome you to engage deeply in this association of colleagues as we live out our vision of “Transforming Lives through the Power of Singing.”

58 National Conferences

This summer in Knoxville, Tennessee, we will gather for our 58th national conference. Some may wonder how we are able to have our 58th conference when we usually meet every two years, and we are celebrating our 80th birthday. For many years, NATS national conferences occurred every 18 months, so one conference would be in the summer and the next over Christmas break. Yes, NATS members used to spend part of their Christmas break at a national conference.

In addition to a wealth of breakout sessions and mini-recitals, our conference program this summer will include a concert by acclaimed tenor **Lawrence Brownlee** at the historic Tennessee Theatre. We hope to confirm soon that this concert will be filmed for later broadcast on PBS in partnership with the Knoxville Opera. This would be a first for NATS. We also will have our first major concert at a conference by **Amanda Reckonwith**, sure to be a significant highlight. In our ongoing efforts to ensure we are creating a sense of belonging, we will be joined by **Nicole Robinson**, CEO of Cultural Connections By Design. A music educator earlier in her career, Nicole will lead us in several plenary and breakout session to further our IDEA efforts. **Kerrie Obert** will bring important research on the voice to us in a plenary session, and we will be joined by faculty and students of one of the oldest degree programs in traditional music in

the country at East Tennessee State University. In another first, we will have a film screening at the national conference featuring the award-winning film “**The Sound of Identity**” about the first transgender singer to sing in major opera houses, Lucia Lucas. We will be joined by the film’s director James Kicklighter. We are also fortunate to have NATS member **Eden Casteel** sharing her cabaret performance *Kahn Artist: Madeline and Me*. These events highlight the richness of our community and by coming together this summer, we CELEBRATE that richness, we SUPPORT the many ways singing artists and teachers choose to construct their careers, and we LIFT UP the singing art as vital to the fabric of humanity. I hope you are making plans to join us.



Allen Henderson
NATS Executive Director

A look forward

In our efforts to continue collaborations with sibling organizations, I am excited to announce that we will be joining our 2025 Winter Workshop with the 2025 National Opera Association Conference, January 5–8, 2025, in Savannah, Georgia. Incoming Vice President for Workshops Kevin Wilson and the planning committee are delighted to bring our colleagues an enriching and integrated event. Look for more details soon.

The 11th International Congress of Voice Teachers (ICVT) returns to North America! NATS will be the host organization as we bring ICVT back to North America and gather in Toronto, Canada, July 31 to August 3, 2025. The Call for Presentations is live, and more details are coming soon as we program around the theme “Voices Uplifted.” Check out the variety of presentation modes available and submit your proposals by June 1, 2024!

Thank you to all our NATS leaders who bring their expertise to our community and make us stronger through these collaborations.

As always, I welcome your communication at allen@nats.org.

Confessions of a Conference Ambassador

By Cynthia Vaughn, Associate Editor for Independent Voices

Oh, how I love music conferences! My first conference experience was the Texas Music Educators Association conference my senior year of high school, when I sang with TMEA All-State Choir. Between rehearsals we had special badges to get into the famed Hall of Exhibits. It was like Disney Land for music nerds. Oh, the swag! I got free stuff from booths for college music programs, music touring companies, music publishers, candy distributors, music software companies, music themed jewelry distributors. I remember being ridiculously excited about those branded pencils, note pads, perusal scores, and candy samples. Even now when I attend the national NATS Conference, when I'm not sitting in a session or concert or presenting something, you will find me in the Exhibit Hall, visiting with colleagues, vendors, and publishers. Over the years, some of those conference vendors like Glendower Jones (Classical Vocal Rep), Darin Adams (Appcompanionist), and Ann Baltz (founder Opera Works) have become friends.



Cynthia Vaughn
Associate Editor
for *Inter Nos*
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NATS National Conferences

Since the first year that I joined NATS way back in 1983, I've been to every kind of conference that NATS offers. There is nothing like the large national conferences (now held every other year) — I don't recall ever missing one. It can be a bit overwhelming for first time attendees. Unless you have a clone machine, it's impossible to attend every session since many of the conference break-out sessions are scheduled concurrently. That ensures that there is a wide variety of topics for every audience from independents to academics, from voice science to mindfulness, from classical to popular to gospel to jazz to musical theater and more. My strategy is to prioritize all of the big, combined keynote presentations and pick and choose breakout sessions, knowing that I will miss some great presentations IRL and will have the option to see the videos later in NATS Live Learning Center. I prioritize the people. Between the sessions and the great concerts, I make time to see as many colleagues as I can. I love reminiscing with long time NATS friends as well as meeting new people. My conference survival strategy is to recognize when I've done too much "peopling" and need some alone time. Then I'll hide out in my hotel room for an hour or so

until I'm ready to go again. Be sure to make some time to get out of the hotel and see the city! NATS often plans a couple of outings before the conference starts, but you can also venture on your own during your stay. I try to arrive a day early or stay an extra day just so that I can explore the conference city. When I first started traveling to conferences, I always looked for someone to share a room with because that really helped with expenses. I still look for ways to save money, like skipping the lobby Starbucks and finding a nearby grocery store for room snacks. Yes, the big conferences are expensive, so I start saving between conferences. It's worth it! Highlights of national conferences I've attended include hearing and meeting artists like Renée Fleming, Kelly O'Hara, John Holiday, Stephanie Blythe and Christine Brewer, Zina Goldrich and Marcy Heisler, Florence Birdwell and Florence Henderson. I have heard keynote presentations by such iconic pedagogues as Richard Miller and Johann Sundberg. I return home from each conference with more connections, more books, song books, handouts, flyers, swag, resources, stories, and memories.



Making new friends at the 2022 NATS national conference in Chicago

NATS Summer and Winter Workshops

For a slower pace, I really enjoy the NATS Summer and Winter Workshops. While the national conferences have a bit of everything for everyone, the workshops focus on one main area of interest with themed programming such as the January 2024 "Art of Collaboration." This workshop at Manhattan School of Music was one of my favorites and included finals of the NATS Artist Awards (NATSAA) and the NATS Musical Theatre Awards. The pace is less hectic, and I found time for lunches with friends and a Broadway and off-Broadway show.

NATS Regional Conferences

One of the best kept secrets of NATS conferences is the fabulous regional conferences that are held around the country. Several regions, including the Northwest Region (Oregon, Washington, British Columbia) hold amazing



A handful of workshop and conference photos over the years, including trips to Germany and England.



conferences with regional and national presenters. Any NATS member can attend, even if you aren't a member of that region. Follow the regional websites for dates for upcoming conferences to watch for dates for upcoming conferences. It's a great way to see what is happening in our organization across the country. These conferences are often held over a weekend.

NATS International Conferences and Tours

If you really want to widen your experience, go international! NATS and dozens of other voice teacher organizations around the world entered into a Joint Venture Agreement in 1994 to facilitate the International Congress of Voice Teachers (ICVT). The next ICVT conference will be held in Toronto, Canada, summer 2025. I love all of the NATS conferences, but my very favorite NATS experiences so far have been the relatively recent NATS Transatlantic Pedagogy Tours — to Germany in 2019 and to England in 2023. Imagine traveling with about 20 of your NATS colleagues and having 10 days to totally immerse yourself in the arts, culture, history, and sights of some of the major arts centers in the world. I can't wait to see where we go next!

If you think that NATS is just for students, think again! I hope I've enticed you to think of NATS as personal and professional development for YOU! Take advantage of the many opportunities to travel and attend NATS regional, national, and international events. I hope to see you next June in Knoxville, Tennessee for the 58th Annual NATS National Conference featuring such luminaries as Nicole Robinson, Lawrence Brownlee, Kerrie Obert, Amanda Reckonwith, and Eden Casteel.

Cynthia Vaughn, associate editor for *Independent Voices*, has been a proud NATS member since 1983. She has been active in leadership at the chapter and region levels, and she was an invited master teacher for the 2020 NATS Intern Program (postponed to 2021 due to COVID). Before moving to Norfolk Virginia in 2022, Vaughn retired from Magnolia Music Studio, the multi-teacher studio she founded and directed in Colorado and Washington from 2008 to 2022. Previously, she was on the voice faculty of Colorado State University, and Art Connects International. Vaughn and the late Meribeth Dayme, PhD, co-authored three editions of *"The Singing Book,"* a leading college voice class textbook/anthology. The new 4th edition by Rowman & Littlefield and NATS Books will be available June 1, 2024.

Are you an “Independent Voice”?

By Cynthia Vaughn, Associate Editor for Independent Voices

Yes, I’m talking to you. An “Independent Voices” author can be any voice-related professional who is a NATS member who is not exclusively or predominantly teaching full time at a university/college/conservatory. That includes many, if not most, of my colleagues.

“Independent Voices” authors may include:

- Independent home-studio teachers
- Independent studio teachers with offsite studios in commercial spaces, churches, schools etc.
- Independent voice teachers who teach virtually
- Independent studio teachers with associate teachers or partner teachers
- Independent voice teachers who focus on different types of clients: children, teens, adults, seniors, artists etc.
- Independent voice teachers who specialize in different styles of music: pop, rock, jazz, indie, singer-songwriter, country, RB, classical, musical theater etc.
- Independent multi-teacher studio owners
- Independent voice teachers who work for multi-teacher studios
- Independent voice scholars and researchers
- Independent voice teachers who teach group voice
- Independent voice teachers/content creators who offer courses; author books, blogs or social media content; host YouTube or other online channels; or present workshops in person or online
- Independent voice and style coaches
- Independent singers’ diction coaches
- Independent voice-related business coaches
- Independent coaches for vocal performance practice or performance anxiety
- Independent voice teachers who specialize in mind-body work for singers
- Independent collaborative pianists who work with artists
- Independent composers who collaborate with singers
- Adjunct or part-time academic faculty who also maintain an independent studio
- Retired or former academic teachers who are now teaching independently
- Independent vocalogists
- Choral directors
- K-12 vocal music educators
- Independent SLPs who work with vocalists
- Independent music therapists
- Sacred vocal musicians
- Other?

Any independent NATS member who has something to say or share that may inform, illuminate, or inspire our colleagues is invited to submit an article for consideration.

In this issue of “Independent Voices,” voice teacher/researcher Catherine Kay Brown shares how her voice disorder and vocal struggles have increased her humility, empathy, and self-compassion on her journey to mindfulness. Michelle Latour celebrates the success of The Rehart Gesner Fund, a special scholarship fundraiser for free voice lessons for K-12 music educators. Just when mezzo-soprano Sarah Hamilton had convinced herself that she was a teacher and pedagogue — not a performer, she found unexpected opportunities to sing as a soloist with symphonies and choruses. She learned that performing makes her a better teacher.



What’s your story?

“Independent Voices” articles and ideas may be submitted any time; however, the annual submission deadlines are July 1 (fall) and January 1 (spring). Articles may be 1,000 to 4,000 words, preferably first person. Please include a headshot and/or topical photo(s) and a 50-word bio. Articles accepted for (digital) publication will be available in the [public area](#) of [nats.com](#) and can be freely shared online. Email CynthiaVaughn@icloud.com.

NATS 58th National Conference Hotel and Attractions



Dinner Cruise Aboard the "Star of Knoxville"
Thursday, June 27, 2024. Boarding begins at 5:15 p.m. Sailing promptly at 6 p.m.
\$60/person all-inclusive (dinner, taxes, and gratuity)

Join us for a casual dinner aboard this authentic paddlewheeler along the Tennessee River. Menu includes beef tenderloin, baked chicken, herb-roasted potatoes, green beans, rolls & butter, garden salad, chef choice dessert and non-alcoholic beverages.)

Marriott Knoxville Downtown
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525 Henley Street
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NATS Special Rate: \$162 + taxes

Hilton Knoxville
(approximately 1 block from
Knoxville Convention Center)
501 West Church Avenue
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902-2591
NATS Special Rate: \$157 + taxes

Crowne Plaza Knoxville Downtown University
(approximately 15-minute walk from Knoxville Convention Center)
401 West Summit Hill Drive • Knoxville, Tennessee 37902
NATS Special Rate: \$156 + taxes

The Tennessean Hotel
(across the street from Knoxville Convention Center)
531 Henley St • Knoxville, TN 37902
NATS Special Rate: \$229 + taxes
Attendees should call The Tennessean at 865.232.1800 to make a reservation by mentioning that they are with the NATS Conference to get the group rate.



Marriott Knoxville Downtown



INTERMEZZO

News Clips
for the
Singing Profession

Intermezzo is a weekly compilation of news clips about the singing profession, in addition to NATS news, that is delivered to each member's inbox. **Intermezzo** tackles today's most relevant issues, gathered from sources like the Associated Press, the *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, and the leading industry publications. It is delivered to the inboxes of teachers of singing in the United States, Canada and more than 35 other countries.



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— ★ ★ ★ —
National Association of Teachers of Singing



ADVANCING QUALITY
VOCAL LITERATURE
BY PROMOTING NEW
WORKS FOR SINGERS

REQUIREMENTS - The work must be:

- (1) a song cycle, group of songs, or extended song between 13 and 25 minutes in length. Genres other than the classical "art song" are discouraged.
- (2) composed for single voice and single acoustic instrument (solo instruments other than piano as the collaborative instrument will be accepted).
- (3) English (or English translation), either in the public domain* or for which the composer has secured appropriate permission.
- (4) composed within the past 2 years (after January 1, 2023).

ENTRY FEE - \$30 for professionals; \$15 for full-time students each entry (payable in U.S. funds to NATS).

ENTRY DATES - June 1, 2024 through December 1, 2024.

ELIGIBILITY - Open to anyone meeting prescribed requirements.

PROCEDURE - All applications must be submitted electronically via www.nats.org. Please read the complete details posted on the NATS website. The following are required materials for entry:

- (1) A PDF copy of the song score(s). Copies must be legible and should include composition title; poet's (or poets') name(s); public domain status or information regarding permission; length and date of composition. **THE COMPOSER'S NAME MUST NOT APPEAR ANYWHERE ON THE SCORE.**
- (2) Digital audio file(s) of the composition(s).
- (3) Recordings must be of the highest quality possible (performance or working).
- (4) The title of the composition should be the only labeling on the recording(s).
- (5) The song order on the recordings must match the song order of the scores.

1ST PLACE

\$2,000

PLUS the composer's expenses to the NATS 59th National Conference in 2026, where the performance of the winning composition will be given.

2ND PLACE

\$1,000

Cash prizes generously sponsored
by composer Lori Laitman

NATS reserves a non-exclusive right to sponsor performances of the winning work for two years without additional remuneration to the composer.

** For U.S. publications, a summary of works in the public domain is available on NATS.org.*

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 1, 2024
APPLY ONLINE AND VIEW COMPLETE DETAILS AT NATS.ORG

First place winner of 2024 NATS Art Song Composition Award is Jodi Goble

"Sea Creatures" is this year's winning work.



National Association of Teachers of Singing

The National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) is pleased to announce composer Jodi Goble has won first prize in the 2024 NATS Art Song Composition Award for her song cycle, "Sea Creatures."



Jodi Goble

Goble will receive a \$2,000 prize and her composition will be performed in recital as part of the 58th NATS national conference (June 28–July 2, 2024) in Knoxville, Tennessee.

"Sea Creatures" is a collection of art songs for soprano and piano, featuring text from multiple poets. Last year, soprano Shelby VanNordstrand together with

Goble on piano performed and released recordings of several songs as part of the digital album, "Storms & Stars."

1. [The Sea](#) (Katherine Mansfield)
2. [I would bathe in the sky's blue](#) (Helen Birch Bartlett)
3. [Young Sea](#) (Carl Sandburg)
4. [Gulls](#) (Winifred Bryher)
5. [The world below the brine](#) (Walt Whitman)
6. Sand-Memory (Frederick R. McCreary)

"I was so delighted to find out that I won the NATS Art Song Composition Award this year," Goble said. "I've been submitting song cycles to this competition on and off since 2008 and have six other pieces that have finished in the finals. 'Sea Creatures' is lucky number seven, and it's a lot of fun to play — and also to sing, I hope! — so I'm very happy that it's the one Shelby VanNordstrand and I get to perform at the conference this summer."

Goble explained the song cycle was centered around its opening poem, "Sea," by Katherine Mansfield.

"[It] turns the sea herself into a siren trying to lure the song's protagonist away from the safety of the beach," Goble added. "I knew I wanted to make that setting a focal point of the

new cycle I was writing for Shelby, so we went looking for more poems that would match the scope and power of the Mansfield. It turns out that lots of poets, both famous and lesser-known, have had compelling things to write about the ocean and human beings' relationship with it — so it was really a matter of narrowing all those incredible poems down to a manageable number."

Previously, Goble received second prize in the 2017 NATS Art Song Composition Award. She was a finalist in 2008, 2018, 2021, and 2022, and she received an honorable mention in 2016.

"I'm so grateful to the NATS Art Song Composition Award just for existing," Goble said. "Back in 2008, when I was first beginning to compose, getting the first email that I had advanced to the final round was such an incredible confidence boost and an encouragement to continue writing. Thank you so much for continuing to welcome and recognize composers who contribute to this amazing art form!"

NATS awarded second prize and \$1,000 to Cecilia Livingston for "hyacinth," which is a set of five songs for soprano/mezzo-soprano featuring text by Duncan McFarlane. Third prize, the Judith Cloud Award established by Carol Mikkelsen, along with \$500 was awarded to Scott Eggert for "Dream Songs," a cycle of six songs for soprano and piano with texts from William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Adjudicators also awarded an honorable mention to Pol Vanfleteren for "What Reality?" — a cycle of seven songs for soprano and piano with text provided by the composer.

As with every year, NATS is committed to keeping the composers and their submissions anonymous in the adjudication process as to evaluate only the music itself. Preliminary adjudicators Mutsumi Moteki, Jeffrey Ryan (2021 Winner), and Anne Beloncik Schantz selected 12 finalists from 45 submissions. Composers Lori Laitman and Kurt Erickson (2020 Winner) served as the final adjudicators, emphasizing the high caliber of this year's entries.

The NATS Art Song Composition Award, established in 1983, continues to inspire and encourage the creation of quality vocal literature. American composer Lori Laitman generously sponsors the first and second cash prizes, and she provides winners with a two-year paid NATS membership. The competition is open to any composer, professional or student, whose submitted work meets the prescribed requirements.

[Recent winners](#) have included Rene Orth (2023), Ericsson Hatfield (2022), Jeffrey Ryan (2021), Kurt Erickson (2020), Philip Lasser (2019), Benjamin C.S. Boyle (2018), Matt Boehler (2017), David Conte (2016), Robert Patterson (2014), Melissa Dunphy (2012), and David Sisco (2010).

The 2024 winners join a prestigious list of past prize winners who contribute to the rich tapestry of vocal music. As NATS looks forward to the next iteration of this competition, the association remains committed to promoting the collaboration of singers and composers in the creation of new vocal works.

Applications for the 2025 Art Song Composition Award will be accepted starting June 1, 2024, with a submission deadline of December 1, 2024. The NATS Art Song Composition Award program is led by Carol Mikkelsen, coordinator, and Lori Laitman, advisor.

About Jodi Goble



Award-winning composer Jodi Goble (she/her) writes text-based, character-driven music fueled by her extensive background as a vocal coach and song-specialist collaborative pianist. Her compositions have been performed across the United States and internationally and featured on National Public

Radio. Her art songs are published in anthologies by New Music Shelf and NorthStar Music. Upcoming and recent commissions include the Savannah VOICE Festival, Seaglass Theater, Really Spicy Opera, Voices of the Pearl,

Blonde Roast Opera Project, the Durward Ensemble, and Laura Strickling's GRAMMY® Award-nominated *40@40*. Recent performances: Songfest, the Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago Spring Lieder Lounge, the ASEAN New Music Festival, Calliope's Call, the National Opera Center in New York City, the Fondation des États-Unis in Paris, San Francisco Opera's Atrium Sessions, and Omaha Under the Radar. She is a 2023–24 Iowa Arts Council Project Grant awardee for her upcoming chamber opera *The Miller's Daughter*.

Goble is a full teaching professor in the department of music and theatre at Iowa State University, music director of the ISU Opera Studio, and the official collaborative pianist for the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition in Iowa. Learn more at jodigoble.com.

About Cecilia Livingston



Cecilia Livingston specializes in music for voice. She is composer-in-residence at the Canadian Opera Company (2022–) and was composer-in-residence at Glyndebourne (2019–22). Her music is driven by melody, mixing styles from minimalism to The American Songbook to create work that is

lyrical and unsettling. Livingston's residencies at the COC and Glyndebourne build on her two-year fellowship

at The American Opera Project in New York, and her current projects include an opera adaptation of "Fugitive Pieces" with poet and novelist Anne Michaels. Livingston's music has been heard at Glyndebourne, Bang on a Can's summer festival, Toronto's Nuit Blanche festival, in recital at Koerner Hall and Carnegie Hall, with Soundstreams, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, and will be released on recording with Deutsche Grammophon in 2024. She is represented by Stratagem Artists in New York. Learn more at cecilialive.com.

2024 NATS Art Song Composition Winners and Finalists:
First Place: "Sea Creatures" by Jodi Goble
Second Place: "hyacinth" by Cecilia Livingston
Third Place (Judith Cloud Award established by Carol Mikkelsen): "Dream Songs" by Scott Eggert
Honorable Mention: "What Reality?" by Pol Vanfleteren
Additional Finalists:
"she conjures" by Lisa Neher
"What You Tell Me" by Scott Ordway
"Temptress Helen: Greek Legend Verse Excerpts" by Peter Dayton
"Between Ground and Sky" by Tiag Yi Tan
"absence, presence" by Joseph Rubenstein
"Evensong" by Ronald Combs
"Love Songs on Poems of Michael Ondaatje" by Ian Cusson
"Satilla Shores" by Jon Grier

About Scott Eggert



Wisconsin-born composer Scott Howard Eggert (b. 1949) was educated at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (BFA, 1971), the University of Chicago (MA, 1979), and the University of Kansas (DMA, 1982), where he studied music theory and composition with such diverse composers as John Downey, Ralph

Shapey, Easley Blackwood, Roger Sessions, and John Pozdro. Eggert was awarded the inaugural *Dean's Award in Music Composition* at UWM, and won a full tuition scholarship and stipend at Chicago. His master's degree composition, *Sonata for Two Pianos*, was premiered at Shapey's renowned Contemporary Chamber Players concerts. He graduated with doctoral honors from KU and subsequently served on the music faculty at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania for 30 years, teaching music theory and composition, and composing music in a wide variety of mediums.

Eggert has received numerous commissions for new music both from individuals and organizations, and his work

has been performed throughout the U.S. as well as in Europe and South America. Eggert's largest commission came in 2017 when he was asked by Penn State University choral director Christopher Kiver, to compose a work to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice that ended World War I. The resulting hour-long cantata, *MEMORIA*, was premiered on November the 11th (Armistice Day) 2018 at Penn State. Other noteworthy Eggert compositions include the widely performed violin and cello duo, *Dance Card* (2001); the solo cello work *Uccello* (2005), played at Carnegie Hall and throughout the Americas by Louisiana State University cellist Dennis Parker; the organ works, *Myceane: Graveshaft V* (1998) and *Hurly Burly* (2010), commissioned by the American Guild of Organists; the piano solo *Quincunx* (2004), commissioned and premiered by GRAMMY Award-nominated pianist Petronel Malan; and *Peacock Pie* (2016), a cycle of 30 songs on poems by Walter de la Mare. Eggert recently completed a commissioned organ work, the *Michelangelo Fantasy* (2020) for Market Square Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where organ virtuoso Ken Cowan played the premiere. At present, he is at work on his first opera.

KNOXVILLE



★ 2024 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ★

JUNE 28 – JULY 2, 2024

FEATURED PERFORMANCES and PLENARY SESSIONS



★ NICOLE ROBINSON ★

Nicole Robinson

- Keynote Speaker
- Matrix of Intersectionality, An Interactive Game
- IDEA Panel Discussion
- Coffee + Conversation

A nationally acclaimed educator, scholar, speaker, and author, Robinson has presented her research at numerous national and international conferences, published articles in several industry-leading research journals and co-authored three academic textbooks. She founded Cultural Connections by Design (CCBD) with the primary aim of supporting organizations in establishing equity-centered processes and implementing best practices to shift the organizational culture towards a culture of belonging — a culture that accepts, values, and leverages the strengths among differences. Drawing from her extensive educational background, Robinson understands that for transformation to occur, learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion had to evolve from a “training” process to an “educational” process. Using her knowledge about teaching and learning and her creativity as a music educator, Robinson can navigate the complexities of the cultural landscape using creative, innovative, and “out of the box” techniques that make her approach like no other.

Nicole Robinson: The Matrix of Intersectionality Interactive Game

Thousands across the U.S. and Canada have used this learning tool which guides individuals to explore the constructs that shape the ideology of privilege. During the session, participants complete an identity mapping process that guides them through a self-discovery process of the various privilege categories, the associated power within each category, and, more importantly, the responsibility required for each.



★ LAWRENCE BROWNLEE ★

Lawrence Brownlee in Concert

Experience an evening of virtuoso musicianship and captivating storytelling with world-renowned tenor Lawrence Brownlee. Presented in collaboration with Knoxville Opera, this concert is a rare opportunity to witness a true master of his craft in an enchanting setting at the historic Tennessee Theatre.

Lawrence Brownlee Performance Class

Brownlee will work with singers on diverse repertoire, sharing his expertise and guidance.

NATS.ORG

#NATSKnoxville2024 ★ NATS.org ★ #NATSinKnoxville



The Unsung Heroes of the Voice: Shaping Timbre with the Tongue and Pharyngeal Constrictors

Presenter: Kerrie Obert

The tongue and pharyngeal constrictor muscles are often blamed for causing tension. But do their actions really cause tension? Or are these structures the unsung heroes in the creation of robust sounds? Research indicates that these structures help narrow the vocal tract to create ring and twang qualities and challenges the notion that "open is better." Join us for this important lecture on vocal tract shaping and gain a fresh understanding of how the vocal tract uses narrowings to enhance resonance. Obert's perspective, based on her MRI and endoscopy research, questions long-held beliefs about how people produce singer's formant, among other things.



The Sound of Identity

Presenter: Director James Kicklighter

A unique opportunity for a public viewing of this ground-breaking

documentary with an introduction by director James Kicklighter. It features the first ever transgender woman performing an opera lead in the U.S. with a professional company, in a standard work. And, it happened in Tulsa. Playing Don Giovanni, Lucia Lucas breaks archaic social barriers, making way for other trans opera performers. The New York Times says "as her booming, powerful baritone ricocheted off the walls, Ms. Lucas, 38, became the (Don Giovanni) character..." The Guardian calls Lucas "a rising star" while the San Francisco Chronicle says while she "boasts a robust, flexible baritone... these (the) roles open up new dramatic vistas."



LATE NIGHT NATS with Eden Casteel

Kahn Artist: Madeline And Me

Eden Casteel was a frustrated teenage soprano in Ohio whose life was forever changed by a Madeline Kahn beer commercial (it was Michelob). In 30 seconds of high-note humor, Kahn inspired Casteel to want to be just like her: "wealthy, glamorous, with an unbelievable singing voice." (Two out of three ain't bad.) Beloved for "Blazing Saddles" and "Young Frankenstein," Kahn started as a classical soprano headed for opera — just like Casteel. With iconic songs, compelling stories, and hilarious anecdotes, this cabaret is an intimate look at the trials and triumphs of both Kahn and Casteel.

You'll laugh and identify with Kahn's (and Casteel's) desire to sing and be funny at the same time. You'll gasp when you learn the battles Kahn fought onstage and off. You'll leave with a deeper appreciation for cabaret and for Kahn, who still inspires performers today.



David Sabella is Amanda Reckonwith

David Sabella (aka Amanda Reckonwith), Broadway's original "Mary Sunshine" in the musical CHICAGO (1996) is also an internationally recognized singer and winner of the Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition (whom Luciano himself declared to be "Excellent, not good, excellent!"). Through his madcap drag diva Amanda Reckonwith, Sabella's 4-octave range continues to dazzle audiences around the world singing greatest hits of Broadway, Pop, and Great American Songbook.

ETSU Program Director & Special Guest

East Tennessee State University has been the leading institution for bluegrass, old-time, and country music in higher education since 1982. Their purpose is to honor the ways that these styles of music have been handed down for generations, while also encouraging innovation and exploration of related and newly emerging musical styles. Hear from current ensemble members and special guest.

Learn more and register for the conference at [NATS.org](https://nats.org).

NATS unveils 2024 Intern Program participants

Sixteen early-career voice teachers and pianists will gather May 29–June 6, 2024.

The National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) is thrilled to announce the selection of 16 individuals to take part in its prestigious 2024 [NATS Intern Program](#).

Designed to enrich the skills of early-career voice teachers and collaborative pianists, this immersive 10-day program pairs participants with veteran master teachers who serve as mentors. The intensive format fosters a dynamic exchange of ideas and techniques, ensuring that attendees walk away with enhanced teaching and coaching skills.

Representing eight NATS regions — Central, Great Lakes, New England, Northwestern, Southeastern, Southern, Texoma, and West Central — the 2024 class is made up of 12 voice teachers (both independent and academic) as well as four collaborative pianists.

Master teachers Alfonse Anderson (University of Nevada, Las Vegas), Melissa Foster (Northwestern University), Mike Ruckles (Mike Ruckles Voice Studio), and Louise Toppin (University of Michigan) will guide the voice intern participants. The collaborative piano interns will have the opportunity to work with pianist Donna Loewy (University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music).

Carole Blankenship, director of the 2024 NATS Intern Program and past president of NATS, expressed her enthusiasm for the outstanding class of interns, noting their diverse backgrounds and contributions to the field.



“We’re delighted to welcome this outstanding group of early career voice teachers and collaborative artists to the 2024 NATS Intern Program,” Blankenship said. “Hailing from independent studios, high school settings, and college programs, these active performers and scholars will join together to exchange ideas and learn from the distinguished Master Teachers. This group is already making significant contributions to our field. They teach and coach in a variety of styles and genres,

including art song, bel canto, commercial music, musical theatre, music of classical Latinx, spirituals and so much more. They’re also making an impact through their voice and historical research, performance, conducting, advocacy, and by serving NATS. We’re eager to weave together the unique perspectives of these teachers, performers, and scholars to be part of the rich tapestry of the 33-year legacy that is the NATS Intern Program.”

From May 29 through June 6, the group will convene on the campus of Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida. Marcía Porter of Florida State University is the local, on-site coordinator, and Tana Field of Murray State University is the vocal literature liaison.

NATS interns often reunite at the biennial NATS conference to foster and maintain the close professional bond they develop in the program. Since its inception in 1991, the NATS Intern Program alumni network has grown to more than 300 voice-teaching professionals.

2024 NATS Intern Program Master Teachers



L to R: Alfonse Anderson, Melissa Foster, Donna Loewy, Mike Ruckles, and Louise Toppin

NATS Intern Program – Class of 2024

Collaborative Piano



Hyun Kim
Kansas City, Missouri



Jiyeon Lee
Carbondale, Illinois



Dario Martin
Fairbanks, Alaska



Bobby Pace
Chadron, Nebraska

Voice



Natalie Cummings
Austin, Texas



Sakinah Davis
River Ridge, Louisiana



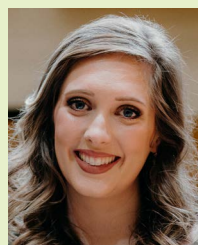
Mathilda Edge
Oberlin, Ohio



Brittany Fouché Strine
Jacksonville, Florida



Christina Haldane
Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada



Christina Ray
Independence, Missouri



Carissa Scroggins
Carbondale, Illinois



Anne Slovin
Bloomington, Indiana



Justin Swain
Athens, Ohio



WeiShu Tsai
Ruston, Louisiana



Sarah VandenBrink
Holland, Michigan



Lisa Williamson
Colchester, Connecticut

About the NATS Intern Program

The [NATS Intern Program](#) offers an exceptional training experience to improve the teaching skills of interns and foster independent relationships necessary for providing the best instruction. This format encourages a dynamic exchange of ideas and techniques, with the goal of improving the studio teaching skills of voice interns and the coaching skills of collaborative piano interns. Learn more by watching the NATS Intern Program [playlist on YouTube](#).

The NATS Intern Program is held annually. Application materials for the 2025 program will be available in late summer 2024.

Support of the NATS Intern Program

The program is offered at no cost to interns thanks to generous support from NATS and donations from several

funds and grants, including the William “Bill” Vessels Endowment, the James McKinney Fund, the Barbara Doscher Fund, the NATS Intern Program Grants: Established by the 2021 Master Teachers, the Clifton Ware Group-Voice Pedagogy Award, as well as the NATS Foundation Heritage Fund.

If you are interested in making a gift to support the NATS Intern Program, please visit the [online donor portal](#), scroll down to make a designated gift, and select “Funding for NATS Intern Program.”

[Donate](#)

You also may contact the NATS office at 904-992-9101. Schools or facilities interested in coordinating/hosting a future NATS Intern Program can contact the [NATS past president](#) for details and facility requirements.

The Art of Collaboration: NATS 2024 Winter Workshop

By DeMar Neal, VP of Workshops

After our 2023 Summer Workshop exploring diverse repertoire, we ventured back to the Big Apple to showcase myriad forms of artistic interactions from January 6–8th, 2024 with our Winter Workshop: The Art of Collaboration.

Held at the Manhattan School of Music, Justin John Moniz opened the workshop with an invigorating session focused on collaborative concerns for teaching the commercial music singer. After this, the inimitable Warren Jones conducted a master class on successful interpretation of operatic arias. Following a lunch break, Rachelle Jonck presented *The Voice is Not a Piano: A Guide for Coaches*, which highlighted the ways pianists can positively affect the development of singers. The first day concluded with a presentation by Ann Evans Watson, who surveyed a wide variety of pedagogical techniques for integrative studio teaching.

Rachelle Jonck began the second day with her session on how the intersection of how poetic and musical concerns can affect authentic Italian diction in performance. This was followed by Merri Sugarman and Eric Jordan Young, who helmed a captivating discussion on audition tactics for musical theatre singers. After lunch, Michael Cassara and Michael Maliakel conducted a Broadway mock audition

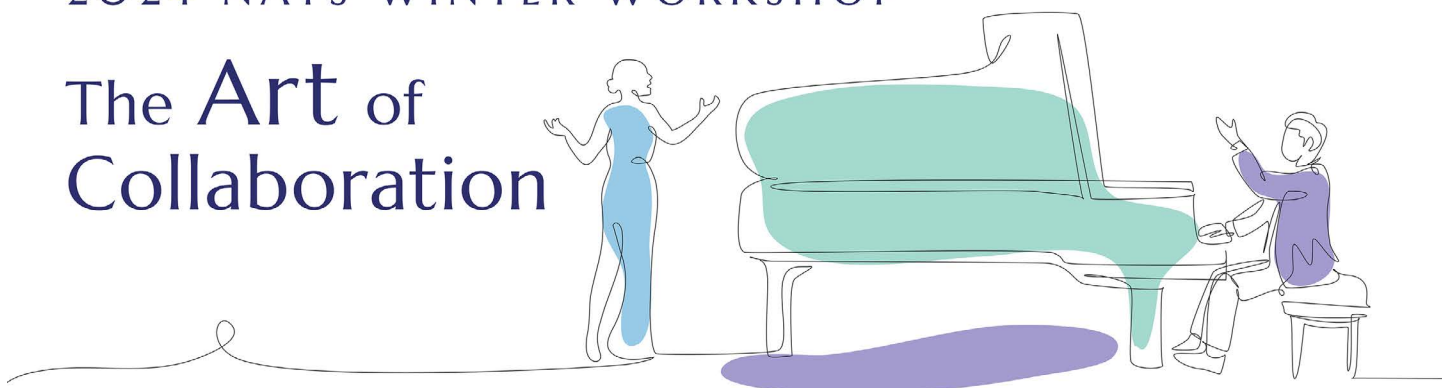
master class, offering insights on maximizing crucial audition moments. The second day concluded with Warren Jones guiding singers and pianists to unlock their full artistic potential in a master class on classical art song.

The third and final day began with Rachelle Jonck examining ornamentation and coloratura and in a variety of classical styles. This was followed by Warren Jones moderating a panel discussion on the impact of technology and “quick answers” on student music connection. Ann Evans Watson and Sarah Wigley closed the workshop with an exploration on how teachers, coaches, and pianists with varying pedagogical backgrounds can cooperate to create a stimulating environment for the emerging artist.

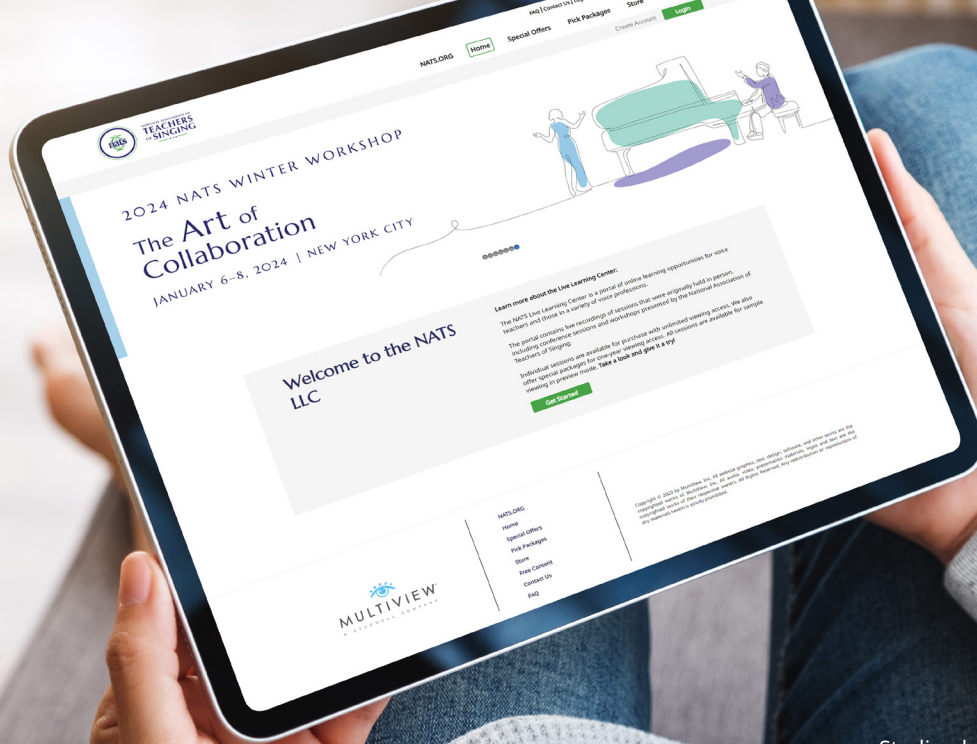
Once again, I am deeply honored to collaborate with such a talented group of colleagues and volunteers. Special recognition goes to our new Director of Events and Programs, Kelly Balmaceda, whose diligent work behind the scenes ensured a seamless event. Blake, from EGAMI AVI, deserves commendation for his video editing of the sessions for the NATS Live Learning Center. Finally, heartfelt thanks are extended to our NATS team members, including Tina, Allen, Beth, and Karen, whose unwavering dedication ensured the workshop’s success.

2024 NATS WINTER WORKSHOP

The Art of Collaboration



JANUARY 6–8, 2024 | NEW YORK CITY



Studio photo courtesy of VOIX DE VIVRE

Missed the 2024 Winter Workshop?

It's not too late to see what the excitement was about! Packages are now available for purchase.

When you log in to the Live Learning Center, you'll experience a fabulous user-friendly platform. Our partners at Multiview have worked vigorously to update the site with new features including a faster load time, sleek look, and effortless navigation. Additionally, this website is entirely mobile friendly on all devices.



2024 NATS Winter Workshop Limited Time Offers

Full Conference Package

\$199 Members | \$229 Non-Members

Pick 20 Package

\$139 Members | \$169 Non-Members

Pick 10 Package

\$79 Members | \$99 Non-Members

REMINDER to our 2024 Winter Workshop attendees

All 2024 Winter Workshop registrants have received an email providing FREE access to all of the session videos until July 31, 2024.

Email multiviewmediasupport@multiview.com for assistance.

To access the NATS Live Learning Center, please visit nats.sclivelearningcenter.com



National Association of Teachers of Singing

A field of top young vocalists from across North America offered thrilling performances as they competed in the 48th National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Artist Awards competition on January 7, 2024.

The event culminated with soprano Emily Siar from Boston winning first place, earning more than \$13,000 in cash and prizes. Siar is a NATS member representing the New England Region, and she is a student of Sabrina Learman and Carole Habern.

CONGRATULATIONS TO



Emily Siar

**FIRST PRIZE WINNER AT THE
48TH NATS ARTIST AWARDS**

CONGRATULATIONS TO



Berri Harris

**WINNER OF THE NATS 2024 NATIONAL
MUSICAL THEATRE COMPETITION**



National Association of Teachers of Singing

Berri Harris received the Florence Birdwell Award for first prize in the NATS 2024 National Musical Theatre Competition on January 8, 2024, in Neidorff-Karpati Recital Hall at the Manhattan School of Music. A student of Melissa Treinkman at the University of Southern California, Harris received \$11,000 in cash and prizes.

The finalists performed in front of a live audience of top professionals in the music industry. This year's competition was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Florence Birdwell — NATS member and legendary teacher at Oklahoma City University.

Both will appear in recital at the NATS 58th National Conference in Knoxville this summer!

Announcing the recipients of the 2024 Emerging Leaders Awards

Recipients receive a grant toward attendance at the NATS national conference

The National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) is pleased to announce that seven early-career voice teachers have been selected to receive 2024 Emerging Leaders Awards. This biennial grant program is designed to recognize teachers of singing with no more than 10 years of teaching experience who are active at the chapter and regional level of NATS. Winners receive a \$750 grant to assist with their attendance

at the NATS 58th [national conference](#), which is taking place June 28 – July 2, 2024, in Knoxville, Tennessee.

This year's applicants were eligible from the Central, Eastern, Great Lakes, Intermountain, North Central, Northwestern, or West Central regions.

Applicants from other regions will be eligible for the 2026 awards. Learn more about the [Emerging Leaders Awards](#).

The seven NATS Emerging Leaders for 2024



Felicia Betts
Eastern Region



Natalie Cummings
Texoma Region



Michaela Kelly
Cal-Western Region



Nicholas Klein
Great Lakes Region



Theodora Nestorova
Eastern Region



Christina Ray
Central Region



Georgeanne Yehling
West Central Region



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NATS presents 15 teachers with Joan Frey Boytim Awards for Independent Teachers

Awarding \$15,000 in grants to support attendance for the upcoming NATS national conference.

The National Association of Teachers of Singing is pleased to announce that 15 recipients have been selected for the 2024 [Joan Frey Boytim Awards for Independent Teachers](#).

Thanks to the generosity of Joan Frey Boytim, NATS is able to present a \$1,000 grant to each recipient for eligible expenses associated with their attendance at the [58th national conference](#) in Knoxville this summer, June 28 – July 2, 2024. To be eligible for the fellowship, the independent voice teachers must be NATS members in good standing who do not hold full or part-time teaching roles at a college or university. They also must teach at least five students per week and be a first-time attendee at the national conference.

“We’re delighted to celebrate and honor independent voice teachers through the Joan Frey Boytim Awards,” said Allen Henderson, NATS executive director. “Over the years, many deserving individuals have benefitted from Joan’s visionary generosity through these awards. These grants support costs associated with attending the conference and allow these independent teachers to make meaningful connections with others in the field.”

Independent teachers make up a significant part of the NATS membership. This partnership with Joan Frey Boytim, author of “The Private Voice Studio Handbook” and editor of “The First Book” series of anthologies among many other works, has offered a dedicated source of support for independent teachers for years.

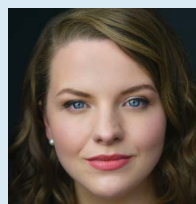
If you would like to make a tax-deductible gift to support the Boytim Awards or any NATS program, please consider a donation through our [online form](#) or contact the NATS Executive Office at donations@nats.org or 904-992-9101.

[View past recipients](#)

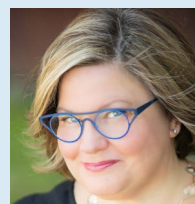


Joan Frey Boytim

Congratulations to the 2024 recipients!



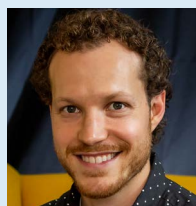
Katie Cochrane
New England Region



Deborah Conquest
Eastern Region



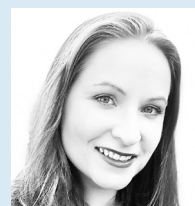
Christina DeMaio
New England Region



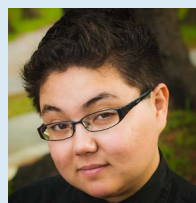
Adam Dyjach
Northwestern Region



Laura Ferranti
Southeastern Region



Louise Gast
Southeastern Region



Lucas Jameson
Southern Region



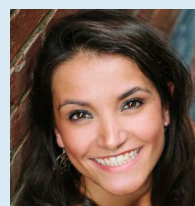
Madison Lombardo
Northwestern Region



Kristin Morris
Great Lakes Region



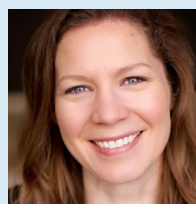
Kelly Murphy
Eastern Region



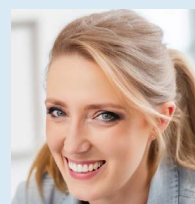
Maria Palombo Costa
Mid-South Region



Les Reagan
Southeastern Region



Kristina Riegle
Great Lakes Region



Kelly Scott
Eastern Region



Brittnee Simone
Texoma Region

Science-Informed Voice Pedagogy Institute

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- **REFRESH** your pedagogy course content
- **ALIGN** your courses with the NATS science-informed pedagogy resources
- **RECEIVE** mentoring in teaching
- **NETWORK** with other teachers in the field

LEARN MORE
NATS.ORG

NATIONAL Student Auditions

— ★ ★ ★ —
National Association of Teachers of Singing

NATS National Student Auditions are headed for Knoxville!

The excitement continues with a national round of competition and prizes at the NATS National Conference in Knoxville, Tennessee, June 28 – July 2, 2024.

REGION – PRELIMINARY ROUNDS

Audition in YOUR Regional Event.
Five singers from each regional category with a national category equivalent will advance to National Online Screening.

NATIONAL ONLINE SCREENING

Friday, April 12, 2024 - Deadline for online digital submissions.

SEMIFINAL AND FINAL ROUNDS

Top three singers from each category advance to final round.
1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners receive prize money.

ELIGIBILITY

All singers ages 30 and younger as of your regional audition date (no lower-age limit).



**TOTAL PRIZES:
MORE THAN
\$85,000**

**FIRST PLACE, SECOND
PLACE and THIRD PLACE**
prizes will be awarded in
each category.

- NEW -

FOR 2023-2024!

Expanded categories for
more ages and genres.
See NATS.org for
full details.



See complete rules, regulations,
and repertoire information at

nats.org

NSA and Inclusion of Children in an Audition Culture

By Dana Lentini and Karen Brunssen

In the fall of 2023, NATS announced that new Children and Youth Categories had been added to the annual NATS National Student Auditions (NSA). These new categories speak to the association's desire to expand our mission of *transforming lives through the power of singing* to include those who are beginning their singing journey far before high school. The Advisory Panel for the formation of these categories includes leading experts in pedagogy for younger pre-pubescent singers. We discussed unique requirements for these ages, various genres, repertoire, and vocal expectations. The categories are musical theatre, classical, and commercial music in age ranges 11 and under or 11 to 14. NATS now includes all age groups for a full spectrum of NSA auditions at the chapter, region, and national levels.



Dana Lentini



Karen Brunssen

build transferable skills for self-awareness, a growth mindset, personal goal setting, and the benefits of helpful feedback. This will set a healthy precedence as younger developing singers come to expect vocal improvement, begin to read music, and accumulate songs they love to sing. Hearing their peers and singers in older categories can inspire them about their own vocal growth and repertoire

choices, preparing them positively for vocal changes during puberty.

"Singing is a life skill, and everyone can benefit from studying singing."

The Purpose of Adding Children to the NSA

NATS Student Auditions have expanded over the past few years with a variety of genres and gender-neutral categories. Now they also include children and youth for a much larger representation of the lifespan. Some chapters and regions had previously welcomed children and youth to their student auditions. Now all NATS entities have the infrastructure needed for these categories to be a regular part of student auditions at the chapter, region, and national levels.

Children and youth will be introduced to vocal and musical support, encouragement, and expectations as they prepare for and participate in our dynamic student auditions. NATS Student Auditions were never intended to be a "talent competition." Rather, they are "auditions" with an opportunity for students to prepare repertoire and gain experience while developing skills needed to perform their repertoire. They are able to perform for adjudicator members who offer encouragement and age-appropriate constructive feedback.

Benefits for Young Singers

Auditioning will provide younger singers with a sense of community as these new categories bring them together in one place to display and share their singing. They will

Audition protocols help to normalize communal expectations for children to display foundational skills for suitable tone quality, breath, alignment, diction, musicianship, artistry, presentation, and interpretation in the style of their category. We may notice more motivation as they spend time practicing technical elements of voice study or learn a new song they heard at the auditions.

Benefits for NATS

NATS is the largest voice teacher association in the world. Our rubrics for NSA help establish consistency and authority for the markers of achievement in singing. These markers are recognized and referenced by many. NATS reviews rubrics and information regularly.

We hope that a "singing for all" mission will encourage more to take lessons, bringing more clients to the current amassed group of independent voice teachers and others who work with younger singers. Singing is a life skill, and everyone can benefit from studying singing. Let's create more business so our members thrive. For thousands of NATS members and their students, commitment and participation in NSA has led to a long-term engagement with singing and NATS. By encouraging young singers to foster a curiosity and love

for singing, we are creating the next generation of singers, singing teachers, and singing supporters. Not every singer will choose to pursue singing or teaching as a profession, but many will look for impactful ways and purposes to sing throughout their lives.

Adjudicating Children and Youth Categories

While many of our NATS teachers are familiar with teaching and adjudicating children, we recognize that this is new for many others. When it comes to teaching and adjudicating singing, children are not miniature adults. Going forward, it will be important to understand the differences to ensure appropriate feedback.

“We must take care to acknowledge a child’s ability as an individual rather than compared to others.”

Childhood is a time of constant non-uniform growth and development. One size does not fit all. Two children of the same age can be at two completely different stages of development. We must take care to acknowledge a child’s ability as an individual rather than compared to others. The size of the child’s larynx and lungs is much smaller than those of adults. The layers of the vocal folds are changing. The hard palate is not fully formed, and the vocal tract is constantly developing. Baby teeth fall out and are replaced by adult teeth throughout childhood. Neuromuscular coordination takes time to develop. It is easy to see why children may not be able to hold long phrases, enunciate with ideal diction, or command their body to convey an elegant performance!

We will all gain a lifespan perspective of the singing voice over the years ahead as we regularly witness vocal development of singing from childhood through adulthood. These new categories promote inclusion of singing for all ages and challenges NATS members to learn about realistic vocal and musical expectations, repertoire, and science-informed pedagogy relative to these young singers in addition to singing during post-pubertal ages and beyond.

We encourage you to explore NSA Children and Youth Resources and NSA Rubrics and Categories on the NATS website to as you prepare to adjudicate our new Children and Youth Categories.

[NSA Children and Youth Resources](#)

[NSA Categories](#)

Our Invitation to All Voice Teachers

We know NATS National Student Audition experiences at the chapter, region, and national levels promote singing skills, artistry, and community for all participants. For those who work with young singers we hope you will encourage your young singers to participate in this new experience. We hope all will promote the narrative of voice lessons as an option for young singers. We hope pedagogy courses will include pediatric vocal pedagogy as a norm for future voice teachers and music educators.

NATS continues to set the pace in our field by giving care and consideration to the many ways we can support the future of the art of singing and singing teachers. Join us as we cultivate our newest NSA categories for Children and Youth!

*After cultivating techniques as a singer, performer, and music educator, **Dana Lentini** created *Born 2 Sing Kids* to nurture the development of young singers through a systematic and customized approach. Through various forms of mentorship, she helps teachers learn about the unique differences in teaching singing to children and how to build their own successful studios. Lentini has been sought after as a presenter for professional music organizations including the National Association of Teachers of Singing, as well as for universities. Her specialized approach to teaching can be found in “Teaching the Child Singer: Pediatric Pedagogy for Ages 5–13.” She also shares a unique spiral approach to repertoire development in her newly released “Singing Kids’ Songbook,” both published by Hal Leonard. More information about Lentini’s consulting, courses, and resources on teaching children in the private studio are offered through her website at danalentini.com.*

***Karen Brunssen**, mezzo soprano and professor of voice at Bienen School of Music, Northwestern University, exemplifies the integration of performance excellence with scholarly insight. As past president of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), Brunssen’s leadership has significantly influenced voice education. Her publication, “The Evolving Singing Voice: Changes Across the Lifespan,” offers a groundbreaking perspective on vocal development, informed by her extensive performing career across the United States and Europe. Brunssen’s contributions to voice pedagogy and her dedication to student success, both on the stage and in academic settings, reflect her status as a distinguished figure in the field.*



NATS CHAT

2023/24 SEASON

SUNDAYS 7-8 P.M. ET*

(6-7 P.M. CT; 5-6 P.M. MT; 4-5 P.M. PT)

**Unless otherwise noted*

NATS Chat invites guests to discuss various topics in an online webinar. Sessions are often held the second Sunday of each month of the academic year. The host and coordinator for NATS Chat is Kari Ragan. The 2023/24 NATS Chat season is generously sponsored by Inside View Press



APRIL 14, 2024

Physical Therapy Interventions and the Performing Voice: More than getting stronger

Featuring Walt Fritz, Abby Halpin and Gena Thurston



In the world of voice pedagogy and vocal health, it has become common to collaborate with a multidisciplinary team to help our singers. This NATS Chat will be a conversation with three physical therapists who specialize in working with the performing voice. We will discuss the wide range of PT-related interventions that can benefit a singer such as manual therapy, myofascial release, laryngeal massage and more.

MAY 19, 2024*

** Different time due to UK — 2 p.m. ET / 11 a.m. PT*

Mix and Match: Piecing Together the Puzzle of Mixed Register

*Featuring Chris Johnson
Co-hosts: Lynn Maxfield
and Kari Ragan*



Mixed registration is a term continuously discussed amongst singing voice professionals. Scott McCoy relates a discussion of registration to “a semantic minefield, requiring one to tiptoe through diverse, competing terminology . . .” Mixed registration presents the epitome of such a minefield. With guest Chris Johnson, and co-host Lynn Maxfield, this NATS Chat will explore the construct of mixed registration from a science-informed perspective in addition to the application of the principles presented.



Register and view schedule at [NATS.org](https://nats.org).

Watch past chats on the [@OfficialNATS](https://www.youtube.com/OfficialNATS) YouTube channel.

ICVT

TORONTO

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NATS program offers transformational journey for composers

Checking in with the 2023–24 participants of the NATS Mentoring Program for Composers

Since the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) [announced](#) the pairing of 12 emerging composers with established art song composers for the [Mentoring Program for Composers](#) this past October, the exchange of many creative musical ideas and talks have taken place.

Now in its fourth iteration, the program nurtures early-career art song composers by pairing them with established composers to create new vocal compositions. The program runs from October to June, with mentee and mentor pairs meeting monthly online. Depending on the needs of the mentees and their interests, the mentors help review their work and provide guidance about the nuances of writing for voice. There is no cost for composers to apply and the program for them is free.

Vocal composers Lori Laitman and Tom Cipullo serve as co-advisors, and both participate as mentors. Each mentee composer has been commissioned to write a new work for a digital concert in June presented by [Cincinnati Song Initiative](#). Past mentees also have had the opportunity to present their works as part of NATS events at the chapter, region or national level.

The 2023–24 mentee and mentor pairs are:

Mentee	Mentor
Joel Balzun	Scott Wheeler
Evgeniya Kozhevnikova	Tom Cipullo
Tommi Paavilainen	Laura Schwendinger
Carolyn Quick	Niloufar Nourbakhsh
Sofia Rocha	Shawn Okpebholo
Myron Silberstein	Stephen Eddins
Ethan Soledad	Lori Laitman
Keane Southard	Lori Laitman
Linda Uran	Juhi Bansal
Stephen Variames	Steven Mark Kohn
Mena Williams	Tom Cipullo
Xuesi Xu	Nkeiru Okoye

Mentee Linda Uran, paired with mentor Juhi Bansal, has found the NATS program to be insightful in several ways.



“As a young composer, having a mentor means having a professional to guide you not just through the composing process, techniques or nuances, but also get to know you with the other side of music which is not so much favored — business,” Uran explained. “My mentor [Juhi Bansal] showed me where to look for an artist’s network and gave me information on where and how my music can get to the wider audience. That was very helpful advice, and I have had a very positive experience.”

Bansal has enjoyed being a mentor in the program as well.

“Linda and I have been meeting and talking about a combination of music details sometimes, and business of music sometimes,” Bansal said. “She’s extremely smart and brings a lot of questions, which lets me focus on giving guidance and support that’s tailored to her.”

Myron Silberstein said his mentor Stephen Eddins has been “incredibly supportive” with the process.

“It’s obvious that he takes joy in seeing the creative process take shape,” mentee Silberstein explained. “I opted to write my own text for my Mentoring Program commission, and Stephen was excited to read it and think about it. He asked detailed, provocative questions about it, engaged with the philosophical elements of the text, and even shared it and discussed it with friends of his. As I began to compose the piece, I shared it with him stanza by stanza. He always had insightful comments that were based in his understanding of what I was trying to convey rather than in his own compositional style. These comments stimulated detailed discussions — sometimes they led directly to revisions, and sometimes they helped me articulate my own intentions more precisely.”

Likewise, mentee Keane Southard is gaining a lot from the program to date.

“I’ve learned a lot from getting to ask my mentor [Lori Laitman] all kinds of questions and learn from her experience and connections in the field,” Southard said.

Part of the overall mentor experience is having someone who shares words of encouragement.

"It has been nice working with my mentor [Niloufar Nourbakhsh] and getting a completely new perspective on my music and my process," said mentee Carolyn Quick. "It's been a neat experience getting a window into her process. She has also been very encouraging, helping keep me and my work accountable."

Quick's mentor also said it'd been great working together so far and that she's looking forward to the music her mentee will be creating for the concert.

Mentee Jane Kozhevnikova is having a "delightful" experience so far with her advisor.

"Tom Cipullo is not only a great composer but also a wonderful mentor and colleague!" Kozhevnikova added. "Our monthly meetings with him are incredible and inspiring. We worked on my art songs and arias from the chamber opera 'Unbroken' (libretto by Germaine Shames). He always has helpful suggestions and is an amazing guide."

Cipullo is also working with mentee Mena Williams.

"I've been very much enjoying my time," Williams said. "Working with Tom [Cipullo] is amazing, and the feedback and advice he gives me during our meetings is extremely helpful. I'm very excited to finish the remainder of the program. I've been on the edge of my seat since the day I got the email saying I was accepted to hear the Cincinnati Song Initiative premiere the work I'm creating for the program."

The Cincinnati Song Initiative will record a song from each composer mentee and share these 12 world premieres in a digital concert in June. This will be the fourth year for the "[Let it Be New](#)" collaboration between NATS and CSI. NATS will post the concert date and details when available.

Mentee Tommi Paavilainen said applying for this program was one of the best decisions he has ever made. He has been learning a lot with his mentor Laura Schwendinger and is enthusiastic about the upcoming CSI opportunity.

"It is an absolute pleasure to write a new song for Cincinnati Song Initiative," Paavilainen said. "As a singer and singing teacher myself, I think the human voice is perhaps the most beautiful and versatile instrument in the world. That's why it always feels wonderful to write new vocal and choral music. I am very much looking forward to the release of the song and the collaboration with the fantastic performers."

Paired with composer mentor Shawn Okpebholo, mentee Sofia Rocha said she has really enjoyed the past few months in the program.

Mentoring Program for Composers Participants



Joel Balzun



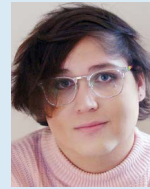
Evgeniya Kozhevnikova



Tommi Paavilainen



Carolyn Quick



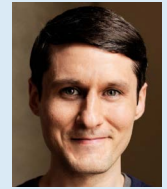
Sofia Rocha



Myron Silberstein



Ethan Soledad



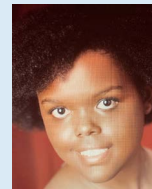
Keane Southard



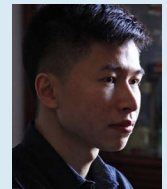
Linda Uran



Stephen Variames



Mena Williams



Xuesi Xu

NATS is proud to offer programming that supports rising composers of new art song. In addition to the [Mentoring Program for Composers](#), NATS holds the [Art Song Composition Award](#) each year. Most recently, NATS named [Jodi Goble](#) as the 2024 first place winner. The association will accept entries starting June 1, 2024, for the 2025 Art Song Composition Award with a submission deadline of December 1, 2024. The contest awards more than \$3,000 in prizes to the winner composers and provides the winners with performance opportunities. The NATS Art Song Composition Award competition is led by Carol Mikkelsen, coordinator, Lori Laitman, advisor.

NATS is currently offering opportunities to support this Mentoring Program for Composers and the costs associated with recording these new works. If you would like to donate, please visit the NATS [secure donation portal](#) and select "Mentoring Program for Composers" from the drop-down menu to designate your gift.

"It's been a wonderful experience working with my mentor, Shawn Okpebholo, and having him as a resource and sounding board for things!" Rocha said. "I've had the chance to look at my music with him, and also to get career advice,

ideas and editing for grant applications and just general advice for living and working as an artist."

She thinks the mentorship has been "very useful" and is eager for the second half.

"I'd definitely recommend the program for others," Rocha said. "I'm most excited to finish up my commissioned art song and hear the performance of it and the work of the other mentee composers in our concert!"

As a mentor, Okpebholo has nothing but good things to say about the process.

"Sophia [Rocha] is absolutely wonderful and a brilliant artist," Okpebholo said. "I absolutely would recommend the program to others, and I'm looking forward to seeing how all of the works come together. To all, keep up the good work!"

Mentee Xuesi Xu is calling the time spent with his mentor Nkeiru Okoye a "fantastic" experience.

"Working alongside [Nkeiru Okoye] has been truly enjoyable, and I have gained valuable insights," Xu said. "As I am composing a song for tenor, Dr. Okoye suggested employing the grand staff for a male singer, emphasizing its visual clarity on score. Additionally, she advised thoroughly digesting the text before commencing the writing process, encouraging me to both read it aloud and commit it to memory. Following her guidance proved immensely beneficial."

Collectively, both mentees and mentors are enthusiastic about these new works being brought to life at the conclusion of the program.

"It will be really nice to hear how artists from all over the world approach their music, to hear their ideas and be introduced to their musical language, and the way they

communicate," mentee Uran said. "I really am looking forward to the final performance."

Overwhelmingly, mentees agree that they would recommend the program to fellow early-career composers.

"I wholeheartedly recommend it to others," mentee Xu said. "In fact, I've already done so."

Building their network is another invaluable component for mentees.

"My mentor [Stephen Eddins] has also been generous in connecting me with other mentors in the program when I have had questions that match most closely with their expertise," Silberstein said. "He is also a tremendously nice person whom I enjoy speaking with. Aside from the direct value in working with my mentor, and the inner confidence that acceptance into the program has bolstered, it has provided introductions to composers who now know who I am and are 'on my side.' I also find it to be a valuable credential; I mention it in the first paragraph of my cover letters for calls for scores and in applications to other programs. I would emphasize to prospective applicants that, though they will be paired with one mentor, they should consider the cohort of mentors and mentees to be an open community. I have felt free to contact other mentors with questions. I have had contact with other mentees, and it has all been a great joy."

For composers who are interested in the program, mentee Kozhevnikova encourages to keep applying, even if they don't get in on the first try.

"I absolutely recommend other composers to apply to the program," Kozhevnikova said. "It took me several attempts before I got in the program, but I am so glad I didn't stop trying. This is a great reminder for me that persistence is one of the necessary qualities for a musician."

KNOXVILLE



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2024 NMTC Gala Finals: A Resounding Success

An evening of celebration and song

The gala finals of the 2024 National Musical Theatre Competition, held on January 8 at the Manhattan School of Music, had a different feel from past finals. The competitors performed for a full house comprised of NATS members, theatre enthusiasts, and industry professionals. Emcee Seth Rudetsky led the evening with Kelli O'Hara serving as the honorary host. O'Hara shared insights about celebrated NATS teacher Florence Birdwell, who was honored at the event. The panel of judges for the finals — Andy Einhorn, Adam Guettel, JoAnn Hunter, and Matt Redmond — brought a wealth of musical theatre experience and perspective. The highlight of the night was the presentation of the inaugural Florence Birdwell Award to Berri Harris, a

student of NATS member Meissa Treinkman at the University of Southern California.

NATS has set a goal of increasing the prestige and budget of the competition, and substantial progress was made on both fronts. First prize was increased to \$10,000 this year and NATS hosted a champagne reception prior to the finals where Linda Snyder's contributions to NMTC were acknowledged and NATS members were able to socialize with Broadway professionals. The competition was fully self-supported, and, in addition, significant contributions were made to increase the endowment that will support NMTC going forward.



Above: Tony Award-winning composer Adam Guettel (L), Broadway music director and conductor Andy Einhorn (R) served as finals judges. Seth Rudetsky, Broadway pianist and host of Sirius Radio's "On Broadway," was emcee for the finals.

Top right: Actor, NMTC Committee member, and Florence Birdwell student, Tiffan Borelli with her husband Ross Kenneth Urken; Michael Maliakel, 2014 NMTC Winner and currently playing Alladin on Broadway; and L Morgan Lee, 2022 Tony Award Nominee for *A Strange Loop*.

Bottom right: Owner, Senior Agent at DGRW and NMTC Committee member, Matt Redmond with a group of his Broadway talent. From left to right: Kaitlyn Frank, (*Funny Girl*, *My Fair Lady*); Becca Petersen, (*Back to the Future: The Musical*, *Mean Girls*, *Bandstand*); Casey Whyland, (*Billy Elliot*); Jeremy Sickles, (talent agent with DGRW); Matt Redmond, Bethany Tesarck, (*Diana*, *Bye Bye Birdie*); Joshua Burrage (*Cats*), Abby DePhillips (former Miss TEEN USA and content creator), Lissa deGuzman (*King Kong*, *Alladin*).



The family of honoree Florence Birdwell, from left to right Mark Fixley, husband of Robyn Birdwell, Florence's grandson, Colin Rockson; Florence's granddaughter, Hayden Rockson, great granddaughter, Ramona Eloise Posterro; Robyn Birdwell, Florence's daughter; Brian Birdwell, Florence's son; and Brian's partner, Patsy Bassel.



Chair of the NMTC Committee and Director of the National Musical Theatre Competition, Frank Ragsdale (Center) with stage, film and television star Laila Robbins and husband Robert Cuccioli, Tony nominee for originating the dual lead roles in the musical *Jekyll & Hyde*.



Past NATS President Linda Snyder is honored by current President Diana Allan during the pre-finals champagne reception hosted by Bedell Cellars.



Louise Lerch Award Winner Julien Gussman on stage during the finals, accompanied by Jan McDaniel.



Performer, teacher and NMTC Committee member Lisa Reagan Love with Broadway star Kelli O'Hara who gave remarks to honor Florence Birdwell, the former esteemed NATS teacher who was her teacher and mentor.

NATS PROGRAMS

Emcee Seth Rudetsky prepares to announce the results. From left to right, Seth, Sebastian Plymette (student of Jeanie Darnell), Julian Gussman (student of Debra Lambert), Luke Weber (student of Shayna Isaacs), Adam Morrison (student of Kelly Holst), Brianna Reed (student of Lora Lee Gayer), and Berri Harris (student of Melissa Treinkman).



And the winner of the Florence Birdwell Award is... Berri Harris! Harris received a \$10,000 cash award, a concert at the 2024 NATS National Conference in Knoxville, and a \$1,000 gift certificate from Hal Leonard Corporation.



NMTC enjoyed unprecedented media attention this year.



Friday, June 28, 2024 | 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

PREMIUM WORKSHOPS

Our premium workshops allow you to customize your conference experience to meet your individual professional development needs. Add these onto your full conference registration at \$60 per premium workshop.

Behind the Scenes: Business Basics and Beyond for Independent Studio Owners

Presenters: Rebecca Pieper, Tom Burke, Elaine Grogan Luttrull

Calling all Independent voice teachers! Our training has given us all the tools we need to teach the voice, but has it prepared us for what it means to be a business owner? This intensive will focus on building your independent voice teacher business from the ground up with all the nitty gritty such as budgeting, financial planning, marketing, creating a studio culture, standard operating procedures and so much more. The workshop will be hands-on with small group work as well as presentations and round table discussions and real-life scenarios with successful independent studio owners sharing what worked and what did not work AND what they wish they knew. It's never too late to be the boss of your own voice studio business and with the help of Elite-Level teacher and coach Tom Burke; Elaine Grogan Luttrull, founder of Minerva Arts and author of Arts and Numbers; and Rebecca Pieper, a successful independent studio owner who wishes she knew then what she knew now. They will be joined by a few guests for a roundtable discussion panel to conclude the workshop. There will also be an opportunity for attendees to have a private coaching session with Elaine after the workshop to be further set up for success.

Better Together: Pedagogical Strategies for Group-Voice Instructors in Academic, Community, and Independent Settings

Presenters: Amelia Rollings Bigler, Craig Philip Price, Dana Lentini, Cynthia Vaughn

Are you seeking to enhance your group voice instruction? Or wanting to learn more about effective and practical techniques for implementing group instruction in your studio? Join leading pedagogues as they present recent research and developments in group-voice pedagogy to foster a deeper understanding of best practices. Learn ways to initiate and structure group-voice classes in academic, community, and independent settings. Become a better equipped voice educator with practical, effective, and efficient techniques for teaching paired, small group, and large group lessons (e.g., structuring syllabi, lesson planning, selecting repertoire, grouping students, adapting to individual needs in group settings, etc.)

A Balance in the Force: Perceiving and Assessing Vibrato

Presenters: John Nix, Joshua Glasner, Theodora Ivanova Nestorova, Yvonne Gonzales Redman

This interactive workshop will engage attendees in understanding, perceiving, and assessing vocal vibrato. Using facilitated group activities, the presentation team will introduce

concepts that enhance attendees' ability to discern and differentiate key aspects of vibrato in the students they teach. The team will also demonstrate how to translate what participants hear and observe regarding vibrato in multiple genres into potential action steps with their students. The session will be focused on topics that have relevance and practical application for solo and group voice teaching in classical, musical theatre, and commercial music styles. Attendees will actively participate and will develop their ability to train their voice students/clients in a mentored setting. The presenters, all active as singers, teachers, and researchers, bring many years of experience in exploring vibrato to this discussion.

AI on the Rise: Making it Work 4 You

Presenters: Christopher Burns, Molly Mahoney

Join Christopher Burns and Molly Mahoney for a dynamic session on real world uses for artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom, studio, and beyond. Dive into the world of AI and discover how it can revolutionize your approach to music education and business growth. This workshop is designed to equip you with practical AI tools and strategies that enhance teaching methods, composition, analysis, and appreciation in music, all while maintaining that essential human touch. Get ready to harness the power of AI and elevate your professional toolkit in this cutting-edge workshop!

Learn more and register for the conference at NATS.org.

How Mindfulness Can Help Us Process Vocal Setbacks and Regain Agency in the Face of Change

By Catherine Kay Brown

One Singer's Story

My first experience with vocal fold paresis occurred after a bout of flu during my senior year of high school. I sought medical care, but the disorder went undiagnosed for nearly 10 years. I limped through my music degree and found fulfilling work doing public relations for classical music organizations. I stopped performing but couldn't fully let go of my desire to sing. Fortunately, I was in a city — Philadelphia — that offered excellent voice care, and I finally found the help I needed. The paresis in my left vocal cord had made my voice breathy and weak. Singing had become painful, and I received a secondary diagnosis of muscle tension dysphonia (MTD), a pattern of tension that negatively affects the voice. Intensive singing voice therapy — and an 8-week mindfulness course — helped me release the physical tension and adjust to my new reality. I regained much of my lost range, and my stamina improved dramatically.

I left my public relations career to open a private voice studio specializing in musical theatre voice. I particularly enjoyed working with singers with entrenched technical challenges. I married and started a family. During my second pregnancy, I got the flu again, despite being vaccinated. My voice felt sluggish, so I returned to my laryngologist. This time the diagnosis was bilateral vocal fold paresis and sulcus vocalis (grooved scarring) on one vocal cord. I was offered surgical solutions, but decided against them, as I was busy teaching and raising two young children.

Bilateral paresis with sulcus proved much more challenging than unilateral paresis with MTD. My voice felt maddeningly unpredictable, and voice therapy was less effective than before. I decided to give up performing and began looking for other ways to invest in my own growth. I remembered how mindfulness had helped me overcome MTD, and I began to wonder if it might help others with voice disorders. I searched the scientific literature and realized that no one had studied the subject. That surprised me, as mindfulness-based interventions have been studied in many other clinical contexts including chronic pain, chronic illness, grief related to illness, and medically unexplained symptoms.¹ I



Catherine Kay Brown

enrolled in a graduate certificate program in applied mindfulness and ran my own study. The resulting article, "Effects of an 8-Week Mindfulness Course in People with Voice Disorders," is now available in press in *Journal of Voice*.

In the following pages, I would like to share some background about my study and highlight some of the many ways that mindfulness can help struggling singers and people with voice disorders.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness, as defined Jon Kabat-Zinn, who pioneered the use of mindfulness in clinical contexts, is "awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally."² Mindfulness takes many forms, including meditation and mindful movement (yoga, tai-chi, qigong). Mindfulness-based interventions such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) are structured, multi-week group mindfulness classes led by a trained instructor. Designed for people with chronic health problems, the classes include meditation, movement, and inquiry, a process in which the teacher leads participants in discussion about their experiences. Daily home practice is encouraged with the use of recordings made specifically for the class.

The Study: Mindfulness in People with Voice Disorders

The objective of my study was to determine whether an 8-week mindfulness course based on the MBSR curriculum and delivered over Zoom could increase mindfulness and lower stress in people with voice disorders, leading to a decrease in vocal handicap.

We recruited 69 people with voice disorders. Thirty-nine participated in the mindfulness course, and 30 were assigned to a waitlist control group. Patients in voice therapy were excluded. Before and after the 8-week timeframe, participants took the Mindful Attention and Awareness Scale, Perceived Stress Scale-10, Voice Handicap Index (VHI), and — for those who self-identified as singers — the Singing Voice Handicap Index (SVHI). Follow-up interviews were conducted with select participants.

When we compared the mindfulness course participants to themselves before and after the course, all outcomes changed significantly in the direction hypothesized. This meant that mindfulness scores increased while stress, VHI, and SVHI scores decreased. The group average VHI score decreased by nearly 11 points with some participants seeing a drop as large as 30 points. (The average decrease in VHI following voice therapy is 13 points.³)

When we compared the changes in the mindfulness course participants to the changes in the waitlist control group, two outcomes changed significantly in the direction hypothesized: mindfulness scores increased and VHI scores decreased. (Changes to the stress scores and SVHI scores were not statistically significant. However, numbers were low for the SVHI scores, as only about half the participants identified as singers.)

Follow-up interviews revealed reduced stress, physical tension, and pain/discomfort; increased somatic (or interoceptive) awareness; positive speaking and singing voice changes; community with other voice disorder patients; increased acceptance of the voice disorder; and an increased sense of agency.

How Mindfulness Can Help Singers and People with Voice Disorders

Mindfulness can help us respond differently to stress

Singers with or without voice disorders face a variety of challenging stressors. For people with voice disorders, stress can be a causative or an exacerbating factor, potentially worsening the disorder and impeding treatment.⁴ Mindfulness may not help us reduce the stressors in our lives, but it can help us respond to them differently. Interestingly, my study did not show a statistically significant change in stress scores among participants when compared to the waitlist control group. (In other words, people still perceived their lives as stressful.) However, follow-up interviews revealed that participants felt mindfulness gave them new ways to manage stressful situations.

Recommended Practice: The Sitting Meditation — This classic meditation exercise involves simply sitting and observing the breath as it enters and exits the body. As thoughts or anxieties arise, you acknowledge them without judgment and let them go. It's simple, but far from easy. Unlike in voice pedagogy or voice therapy, breathing in a mindfulness class is non-prescriptive. We notice our breath as it already is without trying to change it.

Mindfulness can reduce tension, discomfort, and pain

Voice disorder patients frequently experience physical tension and discomfort in their throats.⁵ Mindfulness can help them release this tension and reduce chronic pain. Practicing mindfulness in combination with voice therapy helped me recover from MTD. (I still experience some neck tension, but it no longer negatively affects my voice.) In my study, several participants who experienced dramatic drops in VHI had a diagnosis of primary or secondary MTD, though the study was too small to draw statistically significant conclusions based on diagnosis.

Recommended Practice: The Body Scan — This meditation encourages you to gently bring awareness to each area of the body. In the recording used in my study, we spent extra time on the neck, tongue, and jaw. Participants were encouraged to approach these areas with compassion and acceptance. (In making the recording, I created the Body Scan experience that I wanted for myself when I had MTD.)

Mindfulness can increase somatic awareness, leading to faster vocal change

Singing lessons and voice therapy are both designed to facilitate behavioral vocal change. For voice disorder patients without prior vocal training, this process can feel daunting. Even highly trained singers may find that when something goes wrong, they need to become particularly aware of the interplay between body and voice. Mindfulness has been shown to increase somatic (or interoceptive) awareness.⁶ This component of mindfulness may make vocal learning more efficient for anyone who has low somatic awareness or is new to voice work.

Recommended Practice: The Body Scan (see above) and Yoga — I recommend practicing yoga with a voice-knowledgeable yoga therapist. Examples include Sarah Whitten and YogaVoice® founder Mark Moliterno, who both work in person and online.

Group mindfulness practice helps us feel less alone

Practicing mindfulness in a group has been shown to produce better outcomes than practicing alone. The popular press frequently touts the health benefits of mindfulness, but rarely states that those benefits are almost always gained in group settings. (In MBSR classes, the group effect is said to account for 7% of measurable positive outcomes.⁷)

Many voice disorder patients, particularly those with rare, chronic, or severe voice problems, do not know anyone else

with similar struggles. Singers with voice disorders often fear sharing their experiences due to stigma. The group format of a mindfulness class helps participants feel less alone. Voice disorder patients often experience a profound sense of relief when talking about their problems with people who sound like them. I suspect that vocally healthy performers would also benefit from learning mindfulness techniques in community with their peers.

Recommended Courses: Mindfulness for People with Voice Disorders or a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction class — Practicing mindfulness alone or with recordings is akin to practicing voice alone or with recorded exercises. Like a voice teacher, a skilled mindfulness teacher can guide the learning process and help you overcome any difficulties or misconceptions that inevitably arise. The group aspect of a mindfulness class adds additional benefits, including a sense of community and deeper growth, as participants learn from each other's experiences.

Mindfulness can help us move through grief

In a voice disordered population, grief quickly comes to the surface as people discuss their vocal limitations. Singers may grieve the ability to sing certain repertoire or to perform at all. Patients who need to carefully ration use of their speaking voice may lose friendships and miss out on social opportunities. A mindfulness teacher can help them begin to acknowledge and move through grief. Mindfulness encourages reappraisal, a process by which we reframe the meaning of difficult events.⁸ Singers without voice disorders can benefit from mindfulness as a tool to process difficult experiences and emotions, such as rejection, disappointment, and change.

Recommended Practice: The Mountain Meditation — This beautiful and descriptive meditation invites you to imagine yourself as a mountain: calm and still, despite constant change.

Mindfulness can lead to acceptance

For anyone who struggles with self-criticism, including judging their own voice, mindfulness can provide a pathway towards acceptance. For patients whose voice disorder has drastically altered their life or career, acceptance may feel threatening. They may need to view acceptance as a long-term goal. It may help to reframe acceptance as an active, rather than passive, process. For example, acceptance doesn't mean stopping treatment or refusing to explore new clinical

options. You can accept your voice as it is while still trying to achieve specific vocal goals. But mindfulness teaches us that we naturally resist difficult experiences and that learning to accept them — to the degree that we are able — reduces suffering. Any experience of frustration, grief, or self-criticism is an opportunity to practice acceptance, which can be a powerful antidote to perfectionism.

Recommended Practice: The Lovingkindness Meditation — In this exercise, you are invited to practice extending lovingkindness to someone you know and love, to someone you feel neutral about, to someone you dislike, to yourself, and to the world at large. In my mindfulness classes, I invite participants to extend lovingkindness to their voice, thanking it for the ways it serves them. This can be both challenging and deeply rewarding for those who feel their voice has let them down.

Mindfulness can increase agency

Mindfulness can restore a sense of agency to singers and voice disorder patients. Defined as “a term which encompasses self-efficacy, locus of control, and other related constructs,”⁹ agency erodes when we have little control over or understanding of what is happening to us.

Mindfulness can increase our sense of agency by highlighting what we can and cannot control. A spasmodic dysphonia patient may not be able to control their vocal spasms, but they can change how they respond to the frustration of being misunderstood. A performer who experiences rejection cannot control the casting process, but they may be able to create their own performance opportunities. Accepting difficult things allows us to save our energy for situations where it can make a difference.

Recommended Practice: Expanding Awareness Meditation — Here we focus on the breath, then add awareness of the body, sound, thoughts, and emotions. Then we go into “choiceless awareness” in which we simply notice whatever arises internally or externally. This exercise often helps us notice patterns of thinking or feeling that would have otherwise gone unnoticed.

The Limits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness may not be appropriate for people who have an active addiction; are suicidal; or have untreated psychosis, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, or anxiety.

In my study, some participants saw no change to their Voice Handicap Index scores but found that the course positively changed their relationship with their voice. Patients with moderate to severe VHI scores seemed to benefit most, so it is possible that milder voice disorders are less responsive to mindfulness. Three high level classical singers who were mildly disordered saw little to no vocal benefit from the course. However, they reported starting out with high levels of somatic awareness, and they had performed successfully with their voice disorders for years. (Unfortunately, the study was too small to draw statistically significant conclusions about how mindfulness may affect patients differently according to the severity of their vocal handicap.)

Conclusions

Singers and singing teachers face many challenges that lie beyond our control. Our voices are susceptible to illness, injury, and aging. Environmental factors may take a toll, and economic and technological changes affect our work in countless ways. Mindfulness can give us tools to respond to difficult changes. It may be able to improve our singing (by increasing somatic awareness and reducing unnecessary tension) while also addressing the stressors of life as performers and pedagogues (loss, rejection, aging, isolation, anxiety).

For me, mindfulness has opened a career path that has allowed me to work closely with people whose vocal struggles are far more debilitating than mine. When we talk about acceptance in my mindfulness classes, my students frequently ask me if I have learned to accept my own voice disorders. My answer, which continues to surprise me, is a resounding “yes.” My vocal rehabilitation taught me so much about how the voice works and what kinds of problems singers encounter when something goes wrong. I learned to look for and resolve patterns of physical tension and to listen for underlying health problems that technique alone can’t fix. I would never have chosen to have a voice disorder, and I may still choose vocal surgery. But my vocal struggles have made me who I am and have increased my humility, empathy, and self-compassion: all essential skills for a teacher of voice and mindfulness.

- For upcoming mindfulness courses or to purchase the mindfulness recordings used in the study, visit catherinekbrown.com/mindfulness.
- For other voice-related mindfulness resources, visit mindfulvoicecollaborative.com/resources. I curated this

list with voice specialist speech-language pathologist Julia Gerhard, CCC-SLP, DMA.

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Catherine Kay Brown is an adjunct voice instructor at Immaculata University and a private voice teacher in Downingtown, Pennsylvania. She has presented on mindfulness and the voice for Voice Foundation and the Pan-American Vocology Association. Her students have performed with professional theaters and been accepted to top performing arts colleges. Brown holds a bachelor's degree in music and German from St. Olaf College and a graduate certificate in applied mindfulness from West Chester University.

The Teacher as Performer

An Interview with Sarah Hamilton

Sarah Hamilton has a successful independent voice studio in the Shenandoah Valley of central Virginia, where she is also active on the board of Virginia NATS. With a full studio of teen and adult students in addition to many other activities, Sarah had not been focused on her singing career since before the pandemic. Classically trained with a master's degree, she had immersed herself in vocal pedagogy and anatomy, and learning musical theater and popular cross-over styles to meet the needs of her students. Then, starting summer of 2023, the invitations to perform as mezzo-soprano soloist with regional choruses and orchestras began. Between November 2023 and March 2024, her professional engagements included alto soloist in Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, and Bach's *St. John Passion*. Just when she had convinced herself that she was a teacher, not a performer, she found herself in demand as a regional soloist. It was a bit overwhelming. "I didn't even have a newer concert gown!" After accepting the engagements, she connected with her classical roots and began working with a voice teacher. Her performances have been hailed for her rich mezzo tone, musicianship, and coloratura. Independent Voices editor Cynthia Vaughn spoke



Sarah Hamilton

to Sarah Hamilton a few weeks before the St. John Passion performance.

Inter Nos: Why is it important for you as a TEACHER, to also be a PERFORMER?

Sarah Hamilton: Oh, so many reasons. First of all, it helps me to know what my students are going through when they are auditioning and performing. It is experiential — I learn from doing, not just reading about it. I gain new insights every time I learn and perform new music. I meet new colleagues. I can model preparation for my students. Preparing and performing

gives me empathy for my students. It gives them — and me — some grace because everyone makes mistakes, and no one is devoid of nerves. The myth that you must be "perfect" to be a professional is just not realistic.

Inter Nos: How do you have time to work on your own voice when you are teaching four plus days a week and doing studio admin other days?

SH: I make it a priority to carve out regular practice time and schedule my weekly lesson on a lighter teaching day. I rarely cancel lessons, almost never, but there have been a lot of respiratory viruses going around this winter. In

L to R: Dr. Benjamin Bergey, Shannon Kiser, Dr. Jordan Davidson, Olivia Rominiyi, and Sarah Hamilton



January I cancelled three days of lessons and I slept! It was what I needed to rest and recover. So, I am learning — and modeling — how to take care of myself and my voice. It's one of the benefits of being my own boss.

Inter Nos: What have you learned about being a professional soloist?

SH: Things I already knew: Be prepared. Be reliable. Be on time (early!) for all rehearsals and performance calls. Be collegial. Oh, and ask the soprano soloist what she is wearing so that we don't clash!

Inter Nos: Anything else?

SH: Yes. I am becoming more confident as a performer and teacher. I am learning to trust my voice and technique more. I always work on being better, but I am less critical about my singing. I'm not overthinking as much and I'm more in the moment.

***Sarah Hamilton**, mezzo-soprano, is an independent voice teacher in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. She holds a bachelor's degree in vocal performance from Messiah College (Grantham, Penn.) and a master's degree in vocal pedagogy from the Shenandoah Conservatory (Winchester, Virginia). Hamilton opened her voice studio in 2014, training singers in both classical and contemporary voice.*

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Passion Project: The Rehart Gesner Fund

By Michelle Latour

As voice teachers and performers, planning recitals is a part of the gig. Whether it is for ourselves, our studio, or for undergraduate or graduate students in academia, it is something we all do. I love planning recitals — thinking about unique and unusual repertoire for students, balancing the program between genres, styles and musical considerations, and even staging musical theatre solos and duets. So, what about planning a benefit recital? What started as a casual idea to present a recital in an adult student's private home, quickly blossomed into a full-blown passion project.



Michelle Latour

About a year ago, Katy, one of my adult avocational students, and I were discussing recitals during her voice lesson. She mentioned that she loved throwing parties and had a beautiful home in which to host guests. She nonchalantly mentioned, "We should do a recital at my house, and we can ask some of your other adult students to participate." I responded, "Yes! That's a great idea!" Over the next few weeks we discussed details, and I contacted some of my adult students. Everyone was on board. A few weeks later, again in Katy's lesson, somehow, we came up with the idea of doing a benefit recital, mutually coming to the conclusion that we would raise scholarship money for private voice lessons for Las Vegas public school music teachers. We both agreed that younger students had several avenues for finding financial aid, so why not offer something novel and targeted to a part of the community that might welcome the financial support? And thus, the Rehart Gesner Fund was born.

What's With the Name?

Born from a place of inspiration, the Rehart Gesner Fund is named after our grandmothers, Ruth Rehart and Lorraine Gesner, both of whom had a profound impact on our musical upbringing. The cause is named after them and strives to "provide opportunities to nurture the artist within."

My grandmother, Ruth Rehart, was always present in encouraging me with my artistic endeavors, whether it be attending dance, flute, piano or voice recitals. Lorraine Gesner, Katy's grandmother, was her advocate in life and in music. She paid for piano and voice lessons and attended every performance. We wanted to honor the memory of our grandmothers by advocating for singers the way our

grandmothers championed for us. Offering assistance to those who want to grow and nurture their talent, when they otherwise might not be able to, became the heart of our cause.

Our mission was to raise money for scholarships for private voice lessons for public school music teachers, as we wanted to focus our energies on helping a part of the community that is over-worked and under-appreciated. Public school music teachers often do not have time for themselves, let alone finding time to carve out an hour each week for voice lessons. The Rehart Gesner Fund was an answer for this.

Steep Learning Curve

When we embarked upon this journey, Katy and I had no idea what we were doing or how it would turn out. What we did not anticipate was how much planning, organizing and effort it would take to make this a successful project. We have learned so much!



Above: Nicole Harris-Taylor sings. At right, left side: Latour's student and fund co-founder Katy Morris participates at the recital in her home; Right side: Cassandra Krupp performs.

Katy and I knew absolutely zero about how to livestream an event or how to fundraise, and we for sure did not know how to go about asking others for money. But Katy knew how to throw a great party, I knew how to program a beautiful and interesting recital, and we both had a multitude of motivation and desire to promote a worthy cause.

Katy and I spent countless hours figuring out what we needed to do and then divided tasks. We spent a plethora of time researching — comparing donation platforms, learning how to create, launch, price and manage a silent auction, and deciding which digital invitation medium to use.

We went through the branding process to create a logo, using my studio branding as a starting point, and then built a website and social media pages, created business cards, opened new email accounts, and established business phone numbers. Katy learned how to set up Givebutter (not to be confused with Givebetter), the online platform we decided to use, and she unintentionally discovered how much she loved using Canva to create social media posts. I took on the charge of learning how to run a silent auction.

Other time-consuming undertakings included creating a detailed program with recital information, artist bios, and silent auction descriptions with QR codes for bidding. We learned how to add the scholarship application process on

our website via Jotform. We interviewed photographers and catering companies, and we had numerous banking appointments so that we could open bank accounts under Rehart Gesner.

Thankfully, we had an immense amount of help from family, friends and colleagues who shared our enthusiasm with our cause, whether it be building our website free of charge, writing our press release, donating beverages to the event, or consenting to be on the Board of Directors. The biggest perk was that Katy and I concurred on just about everything, even mutually agreeing to invest a fair amount of our own money for the first recital, and we had a lot of fun seeing our project come to fruition.

We curated silent auction items by starting with what we already owned. We both had some high dollar gift cards for spa treatments and local restaurants, Katy's husband donated an incredibly generous and unique experience, and I donated a three-pack of voice lessons in addition to contributing several bottles of wine from my personal collection. We also had some amazing friends and colleagues who donated items ranging from ukulele lessons to Italian diction coaching to laryngeal massage sessions.

Prior to the event we walked through "day-of" timing and set up tables, chairs and sound equipment. I had written a script





L to R: Cassandra Krupp, Shane Jensen, Stephanie Redman, Nicole Harris-Taylor, Katy Morris, Dr. Michelle Latour, Dina Emerson, Hye Youn Joo Sin.

with minute-by-minute timings for the event, and I developed detailed job descriptions for all our volunteers.

Success Story

When the day arrived for the event, Katy and I had no expectations regarding how things would unfold. We were so excited but were incredibly anxious to see if our efforts would come to fruition. Our original fundraising goal was \$5,000, and we raised more than \$35,000. The event was amazing and an overwhelming success!

The Inaugural Rehart Gesner Benefit Recital was attended by more than 65 guests while also being livestreamed via Givebutter. Other details included catering by a local company, an open bar, a detailed printed program, a silent auction that brought in over \$7,000, valet parking, unique parting gifts for all attendees, a professional photographer documenting the event, beautiful flower arrangements, and a recital featuring six of my adult voice students performing beloved musical theatre, classical and operatic songs, arias and duets.

The generous donations from the community have so far enabled us to extend assistance to seven teachers. We decided to offer scholarship packages valued at \$1,500, giving teachers 12 one-hour voice lessons, with the option to renew. Because my own studio was near capacity, I was able to hire two additional voice teachers to take on students, Dr. Kimberly James and Kimberly Kanitz. It has been incredibly rewarding to not only work with four award recipients but also to be able to hire two Las Vegas voice teachers whom I greatly admire as fellow colleagues and friends. We will open the application process again in February so that we can extend stipends to more music educators.

In working with these clients, it soon became glaringly obvious that there was a need for what we were offering. Many K-5 general music teachers in Las Vegas do not have extensive singing experience. Two of the educators I am currently

working with are instrumentalists and had not received much vocal training or education regarding how to care for their voices during their undergraduate degree programs. One of my clients was a vocal music education major in college and had not sung since the pandemic. It has been an absolute joy and honor in helping her rediscover her voice.

In weekly voice lessons, we have covered an array of topics ranging from learning basic vocal technique to ideas for classroom strategies to discussions about vocal health and hygiene. Many times, lessons were a place where singers could discover their own voices and were grateful to be able to take time just for themselves.

“Our mission was to raise money for scholarships for private voice lessons for public school music teachers, as we wanted to focus our energies on helping a part of the community that is over-worked and under-appreciated.”

An unexpected benefit of developing the Rehart Gesner Fund has been the collaboration with renowned laryngologist, Dr. Reena Gupta. Through Rehart Gesner funds, we have set up a day of voice screenings for all Rehart Gesner scholarship recipients. Many of these teachers experience extreme vocal fatigue due to daily vocal usage in the classroom, so it is an amazing opportunity for these educators to receive this service in order to learn what is actually going on with their voices.

What's Next?

After all the hard work Katy and I dedicated to the first recital, along with the amazing support from the community,

and the rewarding experience of providing voice lessons to music teachers, Katy and I knew that we would continue this work. The Second Annual Rehart Gesner Benefit Recital is scheduled for Sunday, April 14, 2024, with a fundraising goal of \$40,000.

Since we had laid the groundwork with the first event, we started planning much earlier and have more far-reaching goals. Our biggest goal for next year is to have more presence in the community. Although we are a unique and interesting cause, very few people in the community know we exist, and added to that is the difficulty of remembering our name.

We are aiming to appear on a local morning news show, to be featured in a Las Vegas magazine, and to be a guest on a local podcast. We also are hopeful that we can garner more silent auction items and receive more donations through reaching out to local businesses, restaurants and casinos, rather than using our own resources.

New for this year is the development of levels of corporate and individual sponsorship as well as launching the ability for a business or individual to name a memorial scholarship after a loved one with a three-year renewable commitment.

If we really allow ourselves to dream big, we have started thinking about making Rehart Gesner an official non-profit entity and even making Rehart Gesner a national organization so that we can offer voice lesson scholarships to teachers in other communities.

Katy and I developed the Rehart Gesner Fund with a desire to provide opportunities for Las Vegas public school music teachers so they could explore their own personal development. It has been such a pleasure and an honor to help fill that gap, giving deserved recognition and support to educators who would like to cultivate their own talent. We are excited to see what the next chapter holds for us!

To learn more about Rehart Gesner please follow us on Instagram [@rehartgesnerfund](#), Facebook at [Rehart Gesner Fund](#), or visit [rehartgesnerartists.com](#).

*With more than 32 years of teaching experience, **Dr. Michelle Latour** currently owns the LATOUR voice studios, LLC. Latour is a founding member and former Co-Managing Diva for Opera-On-Tap, Las Vegas, and most recently joined forces with several other Las Vegas voice teachers to form the Vegas Voice Teachers Cooperative™. Prior to becoming an independent studio owner, Latour served on the voice faculties at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, Bluffton University, San Diego State University, the University of San Diego, and the International Opera Performance Experience in Italy. Latour received her*



Feeling Philanthropic?

This "Passion Project" is a wonderful testament to the impact individuals can have on the lives of others. It's exciting to see people stepping up to make a difference, and you might find yourself feeling inspired to create your own charitable vocal arts project.

You don't have to start from scratch. NATS offers a wealth of resources to help you channel your philanthropic spirit within the framework of the organization, enabling you to create scholarships and programming for members and their students. These resources include:

- Professional consultation on fundraising strategies and tactics including hosting events
- Assistance in creating fundraising collateral materials and web content
- Creation and maintenance of online fundraising forms to facilitate donations
- Handling of tax receipting and thank-you emails to donors
- Financial management and investment services

There are currently 50 chapter, region, and private studio scholarship funds under the NATS Endowment umbrella, and they all could use your volunteer support. There are also volunteer opportunities to support national NATS projects that support professional development, student access to voice education, composers creating new music, NATSAA, NMTC, and NSA.

Alternatively, you can show your support for one of the many philanthropic projects already established by joining the [NATS Circle of Friends](#). When you make a tax-deductible contribution, you can directly support your favorite chapter, scholarship fund, or NATS program.

doctorate from the University of Southern California, where she was a graduate assistant in the vocal arts department and a scholarship recipient. Her students have gone on to win prestigious awards, to perform professionally in a variety of genres, and to become voice teachers with thriving private studios or serving in academia. She is also incredibly proud of her students who take voice lessons just because they love it — they love the journey, they love discovering their potential, and they just love to sing! To learn more, visit [drmichellelatour.com](#).



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Ana Flavia Zuim awarded 2024 Van L. Lawrence Fellowship

The fellowship is a joint award from The Voice Foundation and the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

The National Association of Teachers of Singing and The Voice Foundation together have named Ana Flavia Zuim as the 2024 Van L. Lawrence Fellowship Award recipient. This prestigious honor includes the opportunity for Zuim to attend the annual Symposium on Care of the Professional Voice, accompanied by a \$2,000 award toward her research.

Zuim is a NATS member from the New York City chapter and currently serves as an associate professor of vocal performance at New York University Steinhardt School in the Department of Music and Performing Arts Professions.

As a voice teacher and researcher, Zuim focuses on dosimetry and singers' perception of vocal fatigue, particularly in the context of Broadway professionals. Her proposal aims to explore safe vocal dosing and assess singers' perception of vocal fatigue using the EASE score.

She intends to create a catalog of vocal doses from individual Broadway roles, analyzing acoustical strategies that singers use during moments of heavy intensity, and establishing tessituras for these roles. Her study aims to provide new parameters for safe amounts of voice use, guide repertoire choices for singers, and contribute to the overall understanding of demands in Broadway performances — especially those requiring heavy belting. This research is expected to benefit Zuim's teaching by providing a scientific basis for repertoire selection and aiding in the training of belters. The dosimetry data collected will guide singers in implementing pacing strategies for career longevity.

Having published studies in dosimetry alongside Dr. Celia Stewart and Dr. Ingo Titze, Zuim's work has already made important contributions to the field. The Van L. Lawrence Fellowship will further support her efforts to expand knowledge in dosimetry and its application to the voice performance community.

The National Association of Teachers of Singing and The Voice Foundation extend their congratulations to Ana Flavia Zuim for her achievements and look forward to the impact of her continued work in dosimetry research.



Ana Flavia Zuim

About the Fellowship

The Van L. Lawrence Fellowship was created to honor Van L. Lawrence, M.D., for his outstanding contribution to voice, and particularly to recognize the importance of the interdisciplinary education he fostered among laryngologists and singing teachers. [The Voice Foundation](#) and the Foundation Heritage Fund of the NATS Endowment award it jointly. The Fellowship winner is provided with the opportunity to attend the annual [Symposium on Care of the Professional Voice](#) and visit laryngologists, speech pathologists,

voice scientists, and research centers associated with The Voice Foundation during the fellowship year, with resulting research to be considered for expedited publication in the [Journal of Voice](#) or [Journal of Singing](#). The Fellowship winners are members of the [National Association of Teachers of Singing](#) who are actively engaged in teaching, have demonstrated excellence in their profession as singing teachers, and have shown interest in and knowledge of voice science. The Fellowship and \$2,000 award are intended to provide opportunities for the Fellow to become more thoroughly acquainted with practices, techniques, technology and people involved in laryngology and voice science. It is hoped that the opportunities and contacts provided through the Fellowship experience will enhance the teacher's ability to do meaningful interdisciplinary research, and will encourage the teacher to apply appropriate voice science advances in the studio.

[Past winners of the Van L. Lawrence Fellowship](#)



Van L. Lawrence, M.D.

About Ana Flavia Zuim

A respected individual in her field, Ana Flavia Zuim's work as a voice scientist has been recently highlighted by CBS. Credited with more than 70 musical theatre productions throughout her career, her work as a musical director and pianist has culminated in several awards, and her research led to findings that can impact the voice field. Her love for sound and the human voice has shaped her career as

a musical director/conductor, voice scientist and expert witness. Having learned to speak English after the age of 23, Zuim developed a keen interest in how someone's accents acoustically impact their speech and as well as the impact of the prosody of language in both speech and singing. Her doctoral dissertation, entitled "Speech Inflection in American Musical Theatre Compositions," had the collaboration of celebrated composers.

Zuim was invited to be a keynote speaker at the Israeli Voice Association in 2023, and she has conducted seminars and workshops all over the world, including countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Brazil, Turkey, Greece, Canada and Australia. Interested in the intricacy of the vocal mechanism, she serves as an active researcher and served as Latin American Governor of Pava (Pan American Vocology Association) from 2018 to 2022. Her research focuses on vocal health, singer's perception of vocal function, hydration, dosimetry, vocal acoustics as well as vocal pedagogy of CCM (Contemporary Commercial Music) styles.

The knowledge of voice science and acoustics acquired during her career, combined with her passion for languages paved the way for serving as an expert witness in forensic voice analysis. She serves as an expert witness for forensic voice analysis cases dealing with both the singing and speaking voice, including criminal cases involving death threat messages, contributing within her scope of practice to furthering a more just legal system in which evidence is evaluated through evidence-based, data-driven science.

Among her credits are the Broadway musical *Hamilton* (Rehearsal Pianist — 2016 till present), the Broadway Across America tours of *Billy Elliot* (Associate Conductor/Vocal Coach), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Keys),

Wicked (Keys), *Matilda* (Keys), *Kinky Boots* (Keys), *The Wizard of Oz* (Keys), *Annie* (Keys), and *The Sound of Music* (Keys). She also has music directed *Billy Elliot* at The Ogunquit Playhouse (2014), for which she received an IRNE Award for best musical direction in 2015, and at the Maltz Jupiter Theater (2015), for which she was nominated for a Carbonell Award (2016). She was one of the recipients of The American Prize award for conducting *Anything Goes* with the NYU Broadway Orchestra (2020) and won the American Prize award for conducting *City of Angels* (2021).

Zuim served as Director of Vocal Performance at the Steinhardt School at New York University from 2016 to 2022 and was promoted to Associate Music Professor in 2022. A native of Brazil, she moved to the United States in 2003 after completing her bachelor's degree in music at State University of Londrina (UEL). She now holds a master's in piano performance (Lynn University, 2006), a doctorate — Ph.D. in Fine and Performing Arts (Florida Atlantic University, 2012) — and a Vocology certification (University of Utah, 2015). Prior to joining the NYU faculty, Zuim served as Director of Contemporary Voice at the Frost School of Music with a secondary appointment as Lecturer of Otolaryngology at the Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami. Her previous experience with contemporary voice and vocal health equipped her to launch a new concentration in contemporary voice at NYU in fall of 2020.

Since prior to college she has enjoyed playing electric bass and toured with a few Brazilian bands, as well as played bass on a few U.S. productions. During her spare time, you can find Zuim exploring a few good golf courses and enjoying the outdoors.

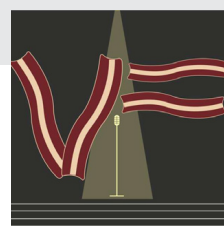
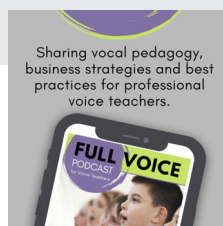
Learn more at anaflaviazuim.com.



NATSCast, the official podcast network of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, has established a

varied, credible and entertaining group of podcasts featuring a myriad of topics — from the business of singing to voice health, teaching singers (of course!), and even chatting with Broadway stars.

Visit nats.org for more information.





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President



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Immediate Past President



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Vice President for Auditions



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Vice President for Outreach



Lily Guerrero
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Kevin Wilson
Vice President for Workshops



Holly Bewlay
Secretary/Treasurer

NATS announces national officers for 2024–2026 term

Leadership team will be installed at the 58th national conference in Knoxville

The National Association of Teachers of Singing has elected officers for the 2024–2026 term and will install the leadership team during the organization’s biennial business meeting on July 2, 2024, at the 58th [national conference](#) in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Newly elected officers include President-Elect [Randall Umstead](#), Secretary/Treasurer [Holly Bewlay](#), Vice President for Membership [Lily Guerrero](#) and Vice President for Workshops [Kevin Wilson](#). Reelected for second terms are Vice President for Auditions [Alisa Belflower](#), and Vice President for Outreach [Nicholas Perna](#).

Alexis Davis-Hazell was installed as president-elect in 2022 and will be installed as the organization’s president. Diana Allan will serve on the board as immediate past president.

“NATS is privileged to count among its ranks a multitude of remarkably talented professionals,” said Executive Director Allen Henderson. “I am confident these elected leaders will help guide the organization with passion, and dedication, and serve with a strong commitment to fellow NATS members. I look forward to collaborating with these individuals as we continue to work toward fulfilling our vision — transforming lives through the power of singing.”

Thank you to all active NATS members who participated in the online voting.

Volunteers needed for the 58th National Conference

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Be an asset to our team!

Please make plans now to help support the NATS 58th National Conference, June 28 – July 2, 2024 in Knoxville, by giving a gift of time and volunteering to help with registration, session support, ticket staffing, being a Welcome Ambassador, or volunteer support staff member. Any gift of time will be greatly appreciated and will ensure that you are an important part of this wonderful event.

For more information, [e-mail](#) us or call our office at 904-992-9101.



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**TEACHERS
OF SINGING**



Many Voices, One Passion — SINGING!



WHEN YOU JOIN THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING, you become part of the largest organization of voice professionals in the world with 7,000+ members in more than 35 countries. Whether working in independent studios, community schools, elementary and secondary schools, or higher education, NATS members represent the diversity of today's music landscape — teaching and coaching in all vocal styles.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Professional development & networking
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- National competitions & student auditions
(Expanded genres & categories for 2024!)
- Virtual & live events to meet your needs
- Access to the NATS Members-Only Facebook Group with feedback on the latest information & technology
- Access to members-only benefits such as discounts on teaching tools, health insurance, & small business tools
- Discounted member prices for NATS workshops & conferences



Student memberships start at just \$46 per year!

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NATS has been an important part of my life. I'm happy to know my gift will help transform lives for years to come.

— DIANA ALLAN, FOUNDING
ENCORE! SOCIETY MEMBER



**You don't have to be wealthy
to leave a gift that will resound for generations.**

Have you considered leaving a gift to NATS in your will or trust?

For many individuals, the bulk of our wealth is held in our estate – our retirement plan, property, life insurance, etc. This means that legacy giving might be the most impactful gift we will ever make.

How would you impact NATS? You could create a named scholarship for future NATS students or name a NATSAA or NMTC prize. You could advance the careers of young vocal teachers. You might provide permanent funding for the program you value most. Making a legacy gift to NATS advances our art in a lasting way.

A legacy gift to NATS makes you a member of the **Encore! Society**, created to recognize donors who have made a long-term commitment to NATS' mission through estate gifts.

Encore! Society member benefits:

- Knowing your values will be carried forward by NATS
- Name recognition, with permission, in the NATS annual reports and on the NATS website
- The opportunity to name a scholarship or prize
- Invitations to NATS President's Reception at the National Conference
- Updates on NATS programs and activities

Changing lives through the power of singing through:

- Gifts In Your WILL OR TRUST
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- Designate NATS as a beneficiary of BANK AND BROKERAGE ACCOUNTS
- LIFE INCOME PLANS

If you would like to discuss a charitable bequest, please contact NATS at 904-992-9101 or email donations@nats.org.

NATS Philanthropy: 2023 Donors

Thank you for transforming lives through the power of singing!

What truly makes life meaningful? Fulfillment comes from many sources, with the arts holding a special place. Yet, perhaps the most significant aspect is the impact we have through acts of love, kindness, and generosity. Reflecting on life, it's often the connections we've made and the people who have shaped us — and those we've impacted in return — that stand out as our most cherished and joyous memories.

The association's support for emerging professionals, such as the NATS Emerging Leaders Awards, the Joan Frey Boytim Awards for Independent Teachers, and the NATS Intern Program, along with our support for students through initiatives like the High School Vocal Music Scholarships, are designed to impact lives in meaningful ways.

Your support for these programs not only expands their reach but also makes them a personal extension of your generosity.

At the core of our philanthropic endeavors is a commitment to authenticity in our relationships, honoring integrity and kindness. We strive for NATS to be an organization you trust, one that inspires you with our vision to transform lives through the power of singing. We invite you, our members, to engage in our philanthropic work. To those in our *Circle of Friends* who already do, we thank you.

■ Investor – \$2,500 and above

Diana Allan — Linda Poetschke Award, Las Vegas Chapter Summer Program Scholarships (In Honor Of Las Vegas Chapter Members & Leaders), NSA Awards in Honor of Dan Johnson-Wilmot, Southern Region Vocal Arts Scholarship Fund (In Honor of Claire Vangelisti), IMPACT Award (In Honor of Karen Brunssen and Her Outstanding Contributions to NATS and Our Mission)

Brian Birdwell — Florence Birdwell Endowment

Robyn Birdwell — Florence Birdwell Endowment

Casey Carter — Texoma Region Vocal Music Fellowships (Honoring Allen Henderson, Debi Popham, Diana Allan, Heather Hawk, Jeffrey and Beth Snider, Angela Turner Wilson, Professor Barbara Hill Moore, Nancy Elledge, Natalie Arduino, Cloyce Kuhnert, Robert Hansen), Linda Poetschke Award

Margo Garrett — Richard Sjoerdsma Excellence in Writing Award

Daniel Johnson-Wilmot — American Negro Spiritual Competition, National Student Auditions Awards



Julie & Josh Krugman — New England Region Mission Fund, National Musical Theatre Competition Fund

Lori Laitman — Art Song Composition Award

Joan Frey Boytim — Joan Frey Boytim Awards for Independent Teachers

Lisa Reagan Love — Florence Birdwell Endowment

Richard Sjoerdsma — Richard Sjoerdsma Excellence in Writing Award, NATS Membership Grant

Emily Slade Meyer — William McKoy Scholarship Fund, Las Vegas Chapter Summer Program Scholarships

Linda Snyder — Richard Sjoerdsma Excellence in Writing Award, National Musical Theatre Competition Fund

Anonymous — William McKoy Scholarship Fund

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American Spiritual Ensemble — American Negro Spiritual Competition

Carole Blankenship

John Holiday — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment

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American Academy of Teachers of Singing — Richard Sjoerdsma Excellence in Writing Award

Karen Brunssen — Las Vegas Chapter Summer Program Scholarships, Texoma Region Vocal Music Fellowships, IMPACT Award, Intern Program Grants Established by the 2021 Master Teachers (In Honor of Melissa Foster)

Bob Bryan — Florence Birdwell Endowment, Las Vegas Chapter Summer Program Scholarships, Marni Nixon Fund, Wisconsin Chapter Vocal Music Fellowships

Geraldine Bryan — Florence Birdwell Endowment, Las Vegas Chapter Summer Program Scholarships

Martha Coffin Evans — Berton Coffin Award Endowment

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Myra Hoane — Winnifred Collier Ringhoffer Memorial Fund
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North Carolina Chapter — American Negro
Spiritual Competition
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George Privett — Kentucky Chapter Scholarship Fund
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Colin Rockson — Florence Birdwell Endowment
Raymond Salazar — Cal-Western Region Scholarship Fund
Randall Umstead — Intern Program Grants Established
by the 2021 Master Teachers, Linda Poetschke Award (In
Honor of Barbara Honn)
Robert Wells — NSA Scholarship Endowment (In Honor of
Diana Allan), NATS Vocal Arts Scholarships
Anonymous — Mentoring Program for Composers

■ Advocate – \$500–\$999

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Marsha Burrows — Linda Poetschke Award
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Timothy Schmidt
Donald Simonson — Richard Sjoerdsma Excellence
in Writing Award
Ronda Sjoerdsma-Wadina — Richard Sjoerdsma
Excellence in Writing Award (In Memory of Andrew and
Reka Sjoerdsma)
Noel Smith
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Craig Tompkins — National Musical Theatre Competition
Fund, Roberta Stephen Scholarship
Clifton Ware — Clifton Ware Group-Voice Pedagogy Award
David White — San Diego Scholarship Fund
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Betty Karol Wilson — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment
Heidi Wylie — Wisconsin Chapter Vocal Music Fellowships
Anonymous (2) — Art Song Composition Award (In Memory
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■ Partner – \$250–\$499

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Honor of NATS Board Members)
Kelly Balmaceda — Linda Poetschke Award
Robert Bastian
Judith Bevilacqua — Ellen Faull Master Teacher Endowment
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Mary Brown Bonacci — Florence Birdwell Endowment
Barbara Buer — William McKoy Scholarship Fund
Torin Chiles — Marni Nixon Fund
Anh Chinn — Tahoma Chapter Scholarship Fund
Laura Claycomb — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment (In Honor
Of my beloved teacher, without whom I would not have
reached the heights of an operatic career)
C. Earl Coleman Jr. — NATS Intern Program
Christin Cornell — Cal-Western Region Scholarship Fund (In
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Mark Craig — Linda Poetschke Award (In Honor of Taos
Opera Institute Founder)

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Scott McCoy — Intern Program Grants Established by the 2021 Master Teachers (In Memory of Shirlee Emmons)

Mary McMeans — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment (In Memory of Mary L. Benson)

Wendy Mullen — Angela Holder Memorial Scholarship

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John Nix — Texoma Region Vocal Music Fellowships, Linda Poetschke Award, Barbara Doscher Endowment

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Holly Boaz

Ashlea Bowens — Linda Poetschke Award

Derrick Bready — Linda Poetschke Award (In Memory of Barbara Bready)

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Rebecca Brou — Texoma Region Vocal Music Fellowships

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John Callaway — Southern Region Vocal Arts Scholarship Fund

Mary Callaway — Southern Region Vocal Arts Scholarship Fund

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Constance Chase — Shirlee Emmons/Berton Coffin Award

Wei-Khuan Chia

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Beverly Deckerbaar — IMPACT Award (In Honor of Karen Brunssen)
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John Dewitt — Wisconsin Chapter Vocal Music Fellowships
Linda Difiore — Linda Poetschke Award
Ken Dryfhout — Wisconsin Chapter Vocal Music Fellowships
Beverly Dugas — Linda Poetschke Award
Cherry Duke — Texoma Region Vocal Music Fellowships
Damon Evans — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment
Alison Feldt
Bronwen Forbay — International Region NSA Scholarships
Diane Foust — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment
Ava Frances — National Musical Theatre Competition Fund
Doug Franke — Las Vegas Chapter Summer Program Scholarships
Geoffrey Friedley — NATS Intern Program (In Memory of Jerrold Pope)
Mimmi Fulmer — Richard Sjoerdsma Excellence in Writing Award
Nedra Gaskill
Karen Gedemer — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment
Sherry Gibbs — Linda Poetschke Award
Marina Gilman — Richard Sjoerdsma Excellence in Writing Award
Kerry Ginger — NATS Intern Program
Rachel Goldenberg — NATS Intern Program (In Honor of Marvin Keenze), Roberta Stephen Scholarship (In Honor of Carmen Tellier, In Honor of Elaine Case)
Malcolm Grainger — Linda Poetschke Award

Carol Gregory — Las Vegas Chapter Summer Program Scholarships
Christina Haldane — Canadian Atlantic Provinces Scholarship Fund
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Nola Harber — William McKoy Scholarship Fund
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Ann Martin — National Musical Theatre Competition Fund
Christina Mendoza — Texoma Region Vocal Music Fellowships

In Memoriam

September 2023– February 2024

Thelma Dare Ahner	Lloyd Mims
Deborah Bulgrin	Anna Mooy
Yvonne Ciannella	Ellen Osborn
David Henson	Mark Van Schenkhoof
Dorothy Ignasiak	

Deirdre Michael — Clifton Ware Group-Voice Pedagogy Award

Diane Miles — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment

Patricia Miller — Unrestricted Gift (In Memory of Mattiwilda Dobbs, In Memory of Richard Miller)

Erie Mills — Karl Trump Award Fund

Rolf Moan — IMPACT Award (In Honor of Karen Brunssen)

Amber Moon — Linda Poetschke Award

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Ayumi Nakamae

Bridget & Arvo Neidre — Linda Poetschke Award

Noelle Notermann — Clifton Ware Group-Voice Pedagogy Award

Edmund O'Meally — Maryland DC Chapter Mission Fund

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Tricia Pan — Las Vegas Chapter Summer Program Scholarships

Oscar Passley — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment

Paul Patinka — NATS Intern Program

Wayne Patterson — Texoma Region Vocal Music Fellowships

Nicholas Perna — NATS Intern Program

Rebecca Peterson — Tahoma Chapter Scholarship Fund (In Memory of Devon Bujdoso)

Linda Poetschke — Linda Poetschke Award

Trey Pratt — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment

Roma Prindle — Clifton Ware Group-Voice Pedagogy Award

Michael Ragosa — Lehigh Valley Chapter Scholarship Fund

Martha Randall — Todd Duncan Award Fund

Melody Rich — Linda Poetschke Award (In Honor Of my teacher, mentor, and friend, Linda Poetschke)

Kristin Roach — Linda Poetschke Award (In Memory of James F Roach)

Shawn Roy — NSA Scholarship Endowment, Southern Region Vocal Arts Scholarship Fund

Pete & Lisa Semon — Tahoma Chapter Scholarship Fund

Malcolm Singer — Las Vegas Chapter Summer Program Scholarships

Katherine Skalak — Felicia Betts Voice Scholarships

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Jeffrey Snider — Texoma Region Vocal Music Fellowships (In Memory Of my mentor, Dr. Edward Baird)

Susan Sondrol Jones

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Catherine Stephen — Southern Alberta Scholarship Fund

Patricia Stiles

Chris & Joe Stuessy — Linda Poetschke Award

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Susan Waddell — Tahoma Chapter Scholarship Fund

Thomas Warren — Southern Region Vocal Arts Scholarship Fund

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Gretchen Windt — NATS Intern Program, IMPACT Award

Miriam Wright — Barbara Hill Moore Endowment

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Marty & Kathy Younger — Las Vegas Chapter Summer Program Scholarships (In Memory of Shanelle Marie Younger)

Jennifer Zaccagni — Linda Poetschke Award

Wen Zhang — Richard Sjoerdsma Excellence in Writing Award

Anonymous (11) — Colorado-Wyoming Chapter of NATS, Ellen Faull Master Teacher Endowment, Mississippi Chapter Scholarship Fund, Richard Sjoerdsma Excellence in Writing Award, Southeastern Region Vocal Music Fellowships, Unrestricted Gift (In Honor of Marvin Keenze), Wisconsin Chapter Vocal Music Fellowships

[See full list of contributors here](#)

NATS STATS

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Percent Change from Previous Year
Active Members													
1st Quarter	6705	6682	6717	6647	6454	6435	6568	6480	6316	6658	6242	6202	-0.6%
2nd Quarter	6894	6859	6869	6801	6582	6584	6694	6573	6724	6848	6391	6349	-0.7%
3rd Quarter	7171	7040	7134	7012	6874	6859	6950	6859	7035	7107	6600	6615	0.2%
4th Quarter	7371	7257	7355	7191	7070	7175	7188	7077	7246	7276	6778	6750	-0.4%
Emeritus Members (included above)													
1st Quarter	394	394	409	430	406	432	436	455	429	471	498	525	5.4%
2nd Quarter	391	395	409	427	404	428	436	416	429	468	496	525	5.8%
3rd Quarter	390	395	409	378	403	428	436	412	428	466	495	522	5.5%
4th Quarter	393	401	416	387	420	428	444	414	443	477	515	542	5.2%
New & Reactivated (included above, cumulative)													
1st Quarter	257	230	306	313	327	355	308	296	329	335	264	318	20.5%
2nd Quarter	358	381	447	465	459	514	438	431	731	526	416	467	12.3%
3rd Quarter	610	569	710	731	755	788	696	722	1053	790	630	736	16.8%
4th Quarter	793	793	933	927	957	1114	939	945	1278	971	849	961	13.2%
Resignations, cumulative													
1st Quarter	40	30	45	77	51	59	54	72	47	91	137	58	-57.7%
2nd Quarter	52	51	46	78	51	59	55	73	49	91	137	62	-54.7%
3rd Quarter	53	51	46	79	51	60	55	73	49	93	138	59	-57.2%
4th Quarter	60	61	50	88	56	68	63	82	58	103	175	146	-16.6%
Lapsed Members													
1st Quarter	823	934	736	875	953	869	826	895	978	778	1088	818	-24.8%
2nd Quarter	744	878	712	831	911	838	799	874	920	742	1041	780	-25.1%
3rd Quarter	699	851	693	788	843	789	762	823	880	716	1003	737	-26.5%
4th Quarter	667	793	659	751	802	710	728	793	835	703	970	702	-27.6%

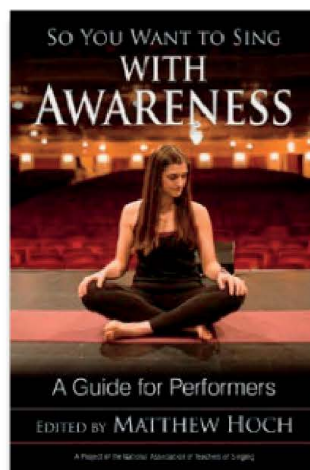
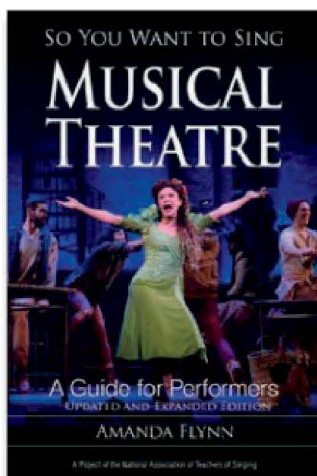
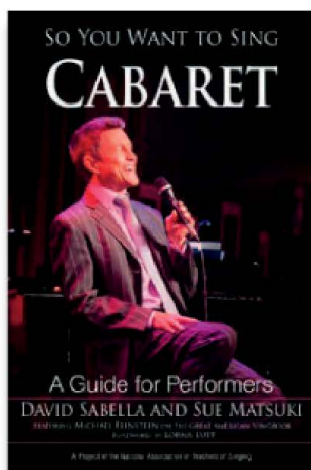
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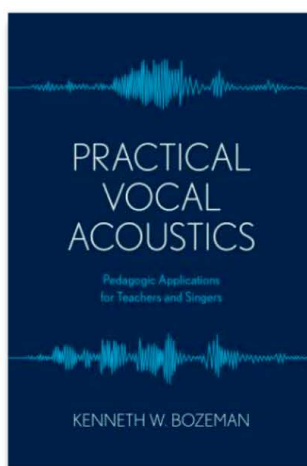
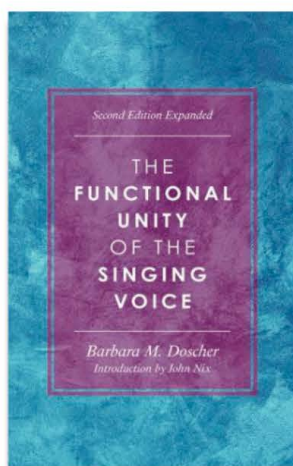
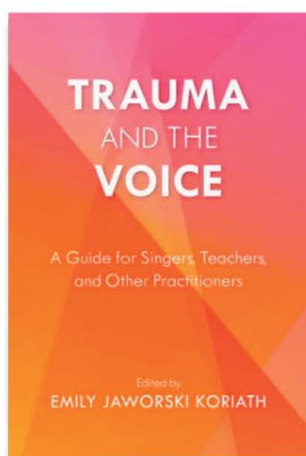


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