

2024 SERNATS



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National Association of Teachers of Singing

Our Vision

Transforming lives through the power of singing.

Our Mission

To advance excellence in singing through teaching, performance, scholarship, and research.

2024

Southeastern Regional Conference and Student Auditions

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico
and the Virgin Islands

March 14-16, 2024
Hosted by The University of Alabama

Thursday, March 14

College Musical Theatre Categories

JUDGES' MEETING	12:00pm–1:00pm
Members must register attendance at this meeting.	Recital Hall
PRELIMINARY ROUNDS	1:00pm
	Various Rooms
SEMI-FINAL ROUNDS	2:30pm
	Various Rooms
BUSINESS MEETING	5:00pm–6:00pm
	Recital Hall
FINALS CONCERT	7:30pm
	Concert Hall

Friday, March 15

College Classical Categories

TEACHER CHECK-IN	8:00am–8:30am
	Lobby
PRELIMINARY ROUNDS	8:30am
	Various Rooms
SEMI-FINAL ROUNDS	1:30pm
	Various Rooms
POSTER PRESENTATION	10:30pm – 12:30pm
	Lobby
SCHOLAR AND ARTIST SERIES	1:30pm – 2:45pm
	Room 248
<i>The Power of Kinesthetic and Inclusive Awareness: A Singer's Guide to Reducing Performance Anxiety</i> <i>Laura Pritchard</i>	1:30pm–1:55pm
<i>An Exploration of Aotearoa New Zealand Composers</i> <i>David Tabere, Jenny Parker</i>	2:00pm–2:45pm
FEATURED VIRTUAL MASTER CLASS with Sheri Sanders This session is open to everyone.	3:00pm – 5:00pm
	Room 257
FINALS CONCERT	7:00pm
	Concert Hall

Scholar and Artist Series

Session 1 | Friday, March 15 | 1:30pm – 3:00pm | Room 248

Presentation 1

1:30pm–1:55pm

The Power of Kinesthetic and Inclusive Awareness:

A Singer's Guide to Reducing Performance Anxiety

Laura Pritchard

As musicians, we are often told to relax for performances, yet rarely taught how to relax or how to get into a focused and aware place in our mind and body. In today's world, feelings of anxiety and lack of awareness are becoming more prevalent for people of all ages. Using a compilation of methods taken from Alexander Technique, Body Mapping, and some meditation practices, the singer will have a process for heightening both their Kinesthetic and Inclusive Awareness to help reduce anxiety before and during a performance. Kinesthetic Awareness is the full consciousness of our bodies' movement in space while Inclusive Awareness is an all-inclusive realization of the many aspects of our performance, including our internal thoughts, our body, the music itself, and our surroundings. The purpose of this research is to better understand how anxiety-inducing elements can affect the singer as well as offer a comprehensive list of strategies which will help alleviate a singer's anxiety both on and off-stage.

Laura Pritchard, mezzo-soprano, has performed roles including Florence Pike in *Albert Herring*, Maurya in *Riders to the Sea*, Carmen in *Carmen*, Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*. In January, Pritchard will return to the National Opera Association annual conference to co-present a session titled *Ballroom Dancing 101: A Beginner's Guide*. Most recently, Laura was selected to be a participant in the 2023 NATS Intern Program. In addition, Laura is a Licensure Trainee with The Association for Body Mapping Education (ABME). Pritchard is part of the University of Alabama faculty as Instructor of Voice & Associate Director Opera.

Presentation 2

2:00pm–2:45pm

An Exploration of Aotearoa New Zealand Composers

David Tahere, Jenny Parker

This lecture recital will present work from a variety of Aotearoa New Zealand poets and composers, including Gareth Farr, Jenny McLeod, and Dame Gillian Whitehead. To facilitate further programming, an introduction to IPA for te reo Māori (the Māori language), will also be presented.

Māori-American baritone **Dr. David Tahere** is assistant professor of music at Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, GA. He enjoys story-telling in any genre, teaching, and introducing people to Aotearoa New Zealand through music. A graduate of Lee University, Temple University, and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, he has collaborated with Jake Heggie, Graham Johnson, Martin Katz, and was a finalist in the 2022 Joy In Singing International Art Song Competition.

A North Carolina native, **Jenny Parker** received her Bachelor of Music degrees in Piano Pedagogy and Piano Performance, and her Masters of Music degree in Accompanying from East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. Mrs. Parker has served as a collaborative pianist for churches, colleges, schools, community choirs, choral festivals, individual performers, and the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga. She is currently serving as pianist at First Baptist Church of Chattanooga, collaborative pianist for the Chattanooga Boys Choir, and as Staff Collaborative Pianist in the Music Department at Covenant College.

Poster Presentation

The Journey of Vocal Health

Angelina Pacitti, advisee of Dr. Jennifer D'Agostino and student of Dr. Rachel Eve Holmes

10:30-12:30pm

Lobby

Confidence in one's ability to advocate for their personal health is crucial. As a vocalist who is pursuing the path of Speech Pathology, I would converse with my peers on the different pathologies of the voice and vocal health in general. The more I spoke with these professional vocalists, the more I began to identify the lack of knowledge and confidence in advocating for their own vocal health. This poster strives to present the information of different vocal pathologies in a way that is informative, palpable, concise, and empowering. I wish for this poster to be a tool for vocalists to turn to for guidance and reassurance on their vocal health journey.

Angelina Pacitti is a senior at Georgia Southern University, majoring in Music with a minor in Biology. She plans to pursue a Master's Degree in Speech Pathology and a Doctorate specializing in Vocal Therapy. Angelina is a vocalist first, but also plays the cello among other instruments. She has done internships with Emory's Voice Center and Wellstar's Otolaryngology department, both inpatient and outpatient, focusing on evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of pathologies of the voice/vocal tract.

Virtual Master Class Sheri Sanders, Clinician March 15, 3-5 p.m. Room 257



Sheri Sanders is an actor and the creator of the rock musical revolution, *Rock the Audition*. She coaches performers and their teachers to master all styles of popular music in order to successfully audition for pop/rock musicals on stage and screen. In addition to a newly revised second edition of her book, *Rock the Audition* (2021) and her audition cuts page on Musicnotes.com, Sheri is passionately bridging the gap between popular music, musical theater, education, and advocacy. She has partnered with Broadway On Demand, and is launching the first fully inclusive online platform for musical theater and opera training. Her college coalition, CARE (Creatives for Artistic and Realistic Equity), piloted at Oklahoma City University, is being introduced and incorporated into musical theater programs nationwide in 2021.

This event is partially funded by a NATS Discretionary Fund Grant.

Hospitality: Room 176

Provided by The University of Alabama School of Music and Opera Theatre

Tally: Room 173

Saturday, March 16

High School and Adult Categories

TEACHER CHECK-IN	8:00am–8:30am Lobby
PRELIMINARY ROUNDS	8:30am Various Rooms
SEMI-FINAL ROUNDS	10:15am Various Rooms
SCHOLAR AND ARTIST SERIES	11:30am – 1:00pm Room 248
<i>Masters of None: An Analysis of the Ideological Shift in Voice Pedagogy from a Master-Apprentice Model to a Collaborative Partnership</i> Laura Thomason	11:30am – 11:55am
<i>Rebecca Clarke: An Expert Text-Painter in Art Song</i> Natalie Sherer, Marcia Porter	12:00pm – 12:25pm
<i>Act Like a Singer/ Sing Like an Actor: Five Steps to Incorporating Acting into the Applied Voice Studio for Musical Theater</i> Alisa Hauser	12:30pm – 12:55pm
FINALS CONCERT	2:00pm Concert Hall

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Scholar and Artist Series

Session 2 | Saturday, March 16 | 11:30am – 1:00pm | Room 248

Presentation 3

11:30 – 11:55am

Masters of None: An Analysis of the Ideological Shift in Voice Pedagogy from a Master-Apprentice Model to a Collaborative Partnership

Laura Thomason

The tradition of teaching voice is one which possesses a rich and complex history; correspondingly, the centuries of study and scholarly writings devoted to its pedagogy present voice teachers with thousands of pages detailing the inner workings of the vocal mechanism and offering varied technical methods, teaching tools, and experience-driven wisdom. However, in exploring the last sixty to seventy years of pedagogical study, remarkably little is written within the pages of pedagogy books outlining the teacher-student relationship. Perhaps this should not be terribly surprising—after all, most pedagogy books are designed to be textbooks discussing the most up to date knowledge about voice and voice science. The inner workings of the student-teacher relationship, by this estimation, are either irrelevant or implicit. In recent years, more questions and more research have come to the fore surrounding the role that the teacher-student relationship plays, both in the voice studio and in the broader music education space; while many of these questions generate from voice pedagogy spaces, they seek and often discover answers in outside but adjacent fields—most especially, psychology. It is the particular purpose of this research to explore the evolution of the master-apprentice relationship within the voice studio, to discuss its historical roots, track its movement from the 1960s to the present, and to use current pedagogical and psychological literature to support the ideological shift from the master-apprentice model towards collaborative partnership.

Laura Thomason holds a BM and MM in Vocal Performance from Converse and Indiana Universities, respectively. An accomplished mezzo-soprano, Ms. Thomason has been a featured artist with GLOW Lyric Theatre and Marble City Opera, among others both in the United States and abroad. Recent operatic credits include the roles of Tessa in *The Gondoliers*, Betty Parris in *The Crucible*, and *The Lover* in the world premiere of *I Can't Breathe*. Also a passionate educator, Mrs. Thomason is currently pursuing her DMA in Voice at The University of Mobile, both to further her academic research and to grow as a teacher.

Presentation 4

12:00pm – 12:25pm

Rebecca Clarke: An Expert Text-Painter in Art Song

Natalie Sherer, Marcia Porter

When singers and pianists invest in detailed observations of text-music relationships in art song, the result is threefold: 1. An enhanced understanding of the composer's musical interpretation of the characters, atmospheres, and emotions in the text; 2. Deliberate choices made by the performers; 3. Compelling performances for the audience who benefit from the storytelling. This perspective fuels our lecture recital of select songs by Rebecca Clarke (1886 - 1979).

Clarke was a prolific composer, but many of her pieces remain unpublished, and the quality of her art songs demand respect and attention. Through highlighting Clarke's use of melody, harmony, rhythm, piano-voice interaction, texture, dynamics, articulations, and expressive directions, we will illuminate key moments of text-painting in three evocative songs.

In “Tiger, Tiger,” (audio recording attached) with text by William Blake, the piano embodies the tiger. We will reveal the motives Clarke uses to create feline sounds as well as her departures into textures that reflect the stars and the lamb described in this famous poem as the speaker considers the Creator, the creation of this tiger, and the questions that arise. We will also highlight two additional songs in a similar fashion: “The Cloths of Heaven” and “The Seal Man.”

Clarke was a master at crafting vivid depictions of text in her songs which are wonderful additions to recital programs at the graduate level and beyond. Attendees will expand their knowledge of this under-performed repertoire and experience the impact of text-driven collaboration between musical partners.

Dynamic pianist **Natalie Renee Sherer** thrives in collaboration with singers and instrumentalists alike. She will make her Carnegie Hall debut in January as a performing artist in SongStudio, led by acclaimed soprano Renée Fleming. Sherer is a frequent recitalist and recently performed with Ryan Speedo Green at Florida State University where she is Assistant Professor of Vocal Coaching. Recent engagements include performances with NATS National Conference and Intern Program, SongFest, Sparks & Wiry Cries’, and Collaborative Arts Institute. Following BM and MM degrees through studies at Manhattan School of Music, Wheaton College, and Roosevelt University, Sherer earned a DMA in Collaborative Piano, studying with renowned pianist Martin Katz, from University of Michigan. collabpianist.com

Award-winning soprano **Marcía Porter** made her New York solo recital debut in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in 2005. An active recitalist, the soprano has performed internationally with the Prague Proms, Piccolo Spoleto Festival, Ravinia Festival, Czech National Symphony Orchestra, Beijing International Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Chautauqua Opera, Dayton Opera, and Chicago Opera Theatre. A member of My Sister’s Keeper, a group of four women dedicated to the performance of works by black women composers, she has appeared on panel discussions for the International Congress of Voice Teachers, the National Opera Association, and the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS). Dr. Porter is a Fulbright Scholar with degrees from Northwestern University and University of Michigan. An active member of NATS, Dr. Porter is Professor of Voice at Florida State University and the recipient of an FSU Undergraduate Teaching Award.

Presentation 5

12:30pm – 12:55pm

***Act Like a Singer/Sing Like an Actor: Five Steps to
Incorporating Acting into the Applied Voice Studio for Musical Theater***
Alisa Hauser

In the professional world of singing lessons for Musical Theatre performers, there is a difference between a voice teacher and a vocal coach. High level professionals may have both a voice teacher for technical study and a vocal coach for repertoire and acting coaching. However, for many students on the collegiate or pre-professional level, this often falls to the voice teacher alone. To be cast in Musical Theatre, it is not enough to sing well. The audience must believe the character’s story, be drawn in and care what happens. It is not enough to “emote” or “put on the facial expression” of someone who is happy or sad. The performance must be authentic and honest and come from the actor playing the scene in the moment.

Some voice teachers feel very confident doing both vocal technique as well as acting coaching. Some teachers have acting training as well as vocal training. But some do not. So how is a voice teacher to prepare their student for musical theatre performance and auditions when the acting is paramount in this art form? In this presentation I offer a five-step method for voice teachers and students to be able to coach the acting of a song within the limited time frame of traditional voice lessons.

Alisa Hauser is an Assistant Professor of Music Theatre at Florida State University in the College of Music. BFA in Musical Theatre from Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and Masters in Voice Pedagogy from Westminster Choir College/Rider University. As a performer, Alisa appeared on Broadway in the original cast of Thoroughly Modern Millie (Alice), Grease! (Frenchy), and in the original cast of Disney’s Beauty and The Beast (Silly Girl). In 2014 she was nominated for a national primetime Emmy award for Outstanding Music and Lyrics for her lyrics to the song “No Trouble” from A Christmas Carol – The Concert (PBS).

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UPCOMING SERNATS CONFERENCES

March 6-8, 2025—Stetson University
March 2026—Georgia Southern University

Be sure to visit:

Beethoven & Co.

Thursday, March 14 – Saturday, March 16, Main Lobby
and

Meghan Raney Photography

Saturday, March 16, 9am-1pm, Band Lobby

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