

VOICE STUDIES @ CARLETON



Whether you are interested in classical songs & arias or musical theatre, Carleton offers voice students the opportunity to pursue their musical interests at all levels and in a variety of styles. We create an open and safe space for students to explore and we encourage our students to pursue their love and passion for music however they see fit.

Features of the Voice Studies Program at Carleton include:

*Weekly Voice Performance Classes,
where students can hone their performing skills.

*Opportunities for regular coaching sessions with the
Voice Studies Program's Collaborative Pianist.

*Themed Showcase Recitals near the end of each term.
(see list of Themed Showcase Recitals at the end of this document)

VOICE STUDIES PROGRAM AND STAFF

Baritone **BENJAMIN ALLEN**



Ben Allen, **Senior Lecturer in Voice**, received the B.M.Ed. from Wartburg College. He has studied with C. Robert Larson, Donna Pegors, Lawrence Weller, and, in New York, with Bernard Taylor. He has performed as a soloist with numerous regional and national organizations including the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra, and the Minnesota Opera. He has taught at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, Bethel University, Macalester College and the Minnesota Center for Arts Education. Ben is currently on the voice faculty and coordinator of the voice department at The International Music Camp.

His interest in understanding the “cultural voice” to better serve the needs of international students who don’t have experience with Western Vocal concepts, led him to become involved with the East African community in Minneapolis where he sang in the Minnesota Swahili Choir. In several trips to Africa, Ben collected and transcribed original African choral music and several of his transcriptions of the works of Tanzanian composer, Israel Kagaruki have been published by Hal Leonard Publishing. Ben is a past Board Chair for a non-profit agency, Compassionate Solutions for African Development (COSAD) which undertakes economic development using the African choir as the target community within which to develop sustainable enterprise projects.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Ben’s teaching is informed by the works of many people. In addition to the teachers previously mentioned he has studied with Richard Miller, H. Wesley Balk, and is currently excited to utilize the ideas of the Swedish Italian School of singing espoused by David L. Jones. Ben uses principles of the Tomatis Method to encourage vocal growth through the perceptual changes to hearing to effect vocal behavior. He has also studied the Alexander Technique and uses those principles to encourage the “undoing” of inefficient vocal behaviors to facilitate positive changes.

Perhaps the most meaningful influences to Ben’s teaching are his colleagues at Carleton. The camaraderie and collaboration with his fellow voice teachers here has been a great joy in his 23 years of teaching voice at Carleton. At Carleton, voice students benefit from this collegiality in co-facilitated Vocal Performance Classes and the free and generous exchange of ideas amongst the voice faculty.



Mezzo Soprano **VICTORIA VARGAS**

Vicki Vargas, **Lecturer in Voice**, hails from New York and has performed with many prestigious companies throughout the country, most recently with Minnesota Opera. She has sung fourteen roles with Minnesota Opera including the title role in *Carmen*. Mrs. Vargas has also sung with the Minnesota Orchestra, members of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, La Jolla Symphony, Wayzata Symphony and the Mankato Symphony. She has placed at the Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions seven times and has placed at several other competitions across the country. She holds degrees from the State University of New York at Fredonia and the Manhattan School of Music. She has been on faculty at the MacPhail Center of Music since 2012 and Carleton College since 2015. She has an interest in working with students of all skills and abilities.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I believe all students with a desire to sing can be given tools to help them sing and perform efficiently and joyously. I believe in teaching a strong technical foundation based on body alignment, ease and efficiency in breath and tone production and an overall connection to the body's function in singing.

Having a strong background in performance I also believe, and teach that understanding the fundamentals can aid in performance for students at all levels and abilities. I also believe that these skills can be used in all genres and styles of singing and encourage students to perform repertoire that speaks to them from opera to contemporary commercial music.



Dr. RICK PENNING

Rick Penning, **Senior Lecturer in Voice and Voice Studies Program Coordinator**, has earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree (Vocal Music Performance) from the School of Music at the University of Minnesota, the Master of Music degree (Vocal Music Performance) from the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati and the Bachelor of Arts degree (Music Education) from Luther College.

A past 1st Place winner of the Metropolitan Opera District competition, he has performed over 35 operatic roles with opera companies including Central City Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Minnesota Opera, Opera Omaha, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Most recently, he was featured in the role of Bill Watson in the world premiere of the acclaimed Minnesota Opera production of *THE SHINING*, an operatic retelling of the Stephen King novel.

He has appeared as tenor soloist with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, Minnesota Chorale, Rochester Symphony (Minnesota), Arapahoe Symphony (Colorado) and the Bismarck/Mandan Symphony Orchestra (North Dakota). Conductors he has worked with include Philip Brunelle, JoAnn Falletta, Jere Lantz, Gustav Meier, John DeMain, Joel Revzen, Helmut Rilling, Murry Sidlin, Dale Warland, Sir David Willcocks, Hugh Wolff and Pinchas Zukerman.

Rick Penning is fortunate to have had many wonderful mentors in his life, including current voice teachers David L. Jones (New York City) and Emma Small (Minneapolis). Past teachers include Rita Patane (New York City), David Adams (University of Cincinnati-CCM) and David Greedy (Luther College). At the beginning of his operatic career, he was privileged to have enjoyed a long relationship with H. Wesley Balk, considered by many to have revolutionized the way singer-actors are trained.

He maintains a busy voice studio at Carleton College (since 1983!) as well as a studio at Augsburg College and his home studio. His students have won awards and have gone on to studies at the great conservatories and major apprenticeship programs, and they have performed with opera companies and on concert stages around the world.

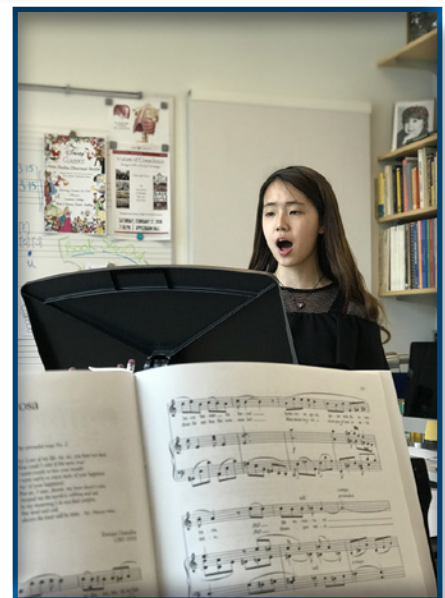
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Penning believes in a collaborative approach with the student in developing the voice as a healthy, efficient musical instrument capable of the full gamut of human emotional expression. He finds particular joy in exploring vocal repertoire from a myriad of styles and genres with his students.



THOMAS BARTSCH

In addition to serving as the **Voice Studies Program Collaborative Pianist** at Carleton, Thomas Bartsch is also the staff accompanist at Augsburg College in Minneapolis. Tom pursues a busy career as a free-lance accompanist/pianist. He is the organist at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Roseville and the Organist/Choir Director at Temple of Aaron Synagogue in St. Paul.



Themed Showcase Recitals

2017 – 18

“Saluting Sondheim”

Music and Words by a Living Legend

“Voices of Conscience”

Songs with a Social Message

“La Fiesta de Canciones”

A Festival of Song from the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America

2016 – 17

“Disney Classics”

Songs from the Classic Disney Films

“Songs by African-American Composers”

“The Legacy of African-American Composers in Classical Music”

“Viva Italia!”

Songs from the Italian Song and Aria Tradition

2015 – 16

“The Great American Songbook”

Songs from Tin Pan Alley to the Great White Way

“Songs by Women Composers”

Including songs by Amy Beach, Lily Boulanger, Alma Mahler & Clara Schumann

“Songs by French Composers”

Including songs by Fauré, Debussy and Poulenc

2014 – 15

“Karaoke Night”

Rehearsed performances of karaoke classics!

“Liederabend”

Songs by German Composers

“Folksong Fest”

Folksong settings by classical composers