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Teaching Philosophy

It is my goal to encourage life-long learning in my students as musicians, and singers especially, will constantly be evolving, growing, and collaborating with new musicians. It is also important to me that my students have multiple tools that allow continued growth and recovery in both their practice and performances. Through instruction about the entire body, not just the vocal cords, as the instrument, students can have a holistic approach to their singing. Using good posture, understanding the importance of flexible, active muscles and release of bad tension, students can vastly improve their breath support, performance presentation, and use their bodies as athletes to keep the vocal mechanism healthy. By using other externalization techniques such as hand gestures, students can monitor their air flow, and thus improve their legato. I also teach a high tongue technique based off of studies of vowel production and the most efficient, effective singer formant resonance. By talking about and isolating resonances before integrating them, my students then have methods on how to approach consistency throughout their entire vocal range. By combining all of this work in vocalization, I then make sure to spend at least half of the lesson applying the same technical work to repertoire.

My most important goal is that a student understands the concepts and coordination we are addressing in our lessons so they can apply them in their own time. I therefore use a lot of questions in my teaching to have the student take ownership of their instrument by listening to themselves, noticing sensations, and using our monitoring gestures to evaluate their legato and range consistency. There is no better way to deeply understand a concept than to articulate and instruct it. I also make sure to have students perform, put themselves in the scenario of auditions, and present in a lesson as if in performance so that they can learn how to commit to the moment, not overthink technique when making music, and to know how to recover when things begin to derail.

I, too, both as a teacher and a singer myself, am a life long learner and I am constantly looking to learn new angles, methods, and ways to reach different types of learners and singers. I am constantly observing lessons taught by other teachers in masterclasses and private lessons. I often collaborate with colleagues to discuss ways to approach various challenges, common concerns, and repertoire with which I am less familiar. I also make sure to keep a very open line of communication with my students to hear their frustrations, questions, anxieties, and successes and allow them to check in with me in a variety of ways to make sure they are comfortable communicating in whatever way best fits their personality.

Teaching singing, and music in general, is an incredible honor as it allows us as humans to explore new pathways and ways of expressing ourselves. It encourages the most intimate level of self knowledge, being able to acknowledge and address tension and relaxation throughout the physical body, take on new physicality as different characters, and to try new extremes of our own emotional journeys in ways that are not always accessible in our modern daily lives.

I currently am a professor of French, Italian, and German Diction and Repertoire at Peabody Conservatory, teach piano and voice at Music & Arts in Germantown, MD, and maintain a private studio in Baltimore, MD.