

SFCM Opera and Musical Theatre Program
2020-21 REPERTOIRE & AUDITION INFORMATION
Version: 7/20/20 JMC

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT OPERA & MUSICAL THEATRE ENSEMBLES

We are excited to present you our plan for the 2020-21 season of Opera and Musical Theatre at SFCM, which will feature three operas (including a world premiere by the 2020 Pulitzer Prize Winner in Music!), two musicals and a number of Opera Workshop performances.

You may have read in SFCM communication that the school is planning for a hybrid learning model, including in-person ensemble sessions in small enough groups to allow for social distancing. You can read the latest official SFCM news about the topic on this page, which is updated regularly:

<https://sfc.edu/newsroom/sfc-returns-campus-hybrid-learning-model>

Given the constantly changing nature of the health regulations around the spread of the virus, any information contained in this document is only our best plan, based on the information available at the time of writing this document. All is subject to change (and, quite possibly, for reasons beyond our control). All students should be prepared for significant changes to both repertoire and format for any of our Opera and Musical Theatre ensembles.

The SFCM Opera and Musical Theatre program is a roster of courses and ensembles specifically tailored towards Voice students, offering acting & movement, craft building and performance opportunities. Participation in one of our ensembles may fulfill the ensemble requirements of your Voice degree and we hope you will be taking our classes and auditioning for our season! However, participation in any of our activities (including Opera Workshop) is **voluntary and by audition only**. However, if selected, the student must fulfill his/her obligation to the ensemble. Please refer to the SFCM Course Catalogue for ensemble and class meeting times and only audition if your expected schedule of required academic classes will allow you to participate. We are very limited in our ability to work around individual scheduling conflicts!

Returning students

- Please note changes to Musical Theatre course denominations and schedule (main Musical Theatre show is now in early February).
- Those who were offered roles in Firebird Motel and Die Fledermaus last year will need to express interest (in the audition form) and re-audition.

New-to-SFCM students

- Please read this document in its entirety and very carefully! Our policies may be very different from those of other schools!
- Please be aware we operate on a “supply and demand” basis and that, normally, we have more students interested than opportunities available. Therefore, our auditions are highly competitive, but we take pride in giving everybody a fair chance. We are ready for you to wow us!

- Please note that you will need access to your SFCM assigned E-mail address to complete necessary steps in the audition process. Please contact SFCM staffer who is handling your Admission or Orientation process for questions about how to access your SFCM E-mail address.

2020-21 REPERTOIRE

ENSEMBLE	PERFORMANCES	EVENT TITLE	INSTRUCTORS	AVAILABLE ROLES
ENS 509 Advanced Opera Workshop	Friday December 4th 7:30 pm Concert Hall	OPERA WORKSHOP SHOWCASE	Director: Jose Maria Condemi & TBD Conductor: Curt Pajer & TBD	-Ensemble is geared towards returning SFCM students, both graduate and undergraduate with previous OpShop experience. -Freshmen are not eligible
ENS 508 Beginning Opera Workshop <i>(New to OpShop /Grad and Undergrad)</i>	Thursday Dec 10th 7:30 pm Osher Salon	OPERA WORKSHOP OPEN CLASS I	Director: Jose Maria Condemi & TBD Conductor: Curt Pajer & TBD	-Freshmen are not eligible -Repertoire, roles and languages TBD
	Thursday February 18th 7:30 pm Osher Salon	OPERA WORKSHOP OPEN CLASS II	Director: Heather Mathews & TBD Conductor: Curt Pajer & TBD	
ENS 512 Fall Opera	Thursday December 17th & Friday December 18th 7:30 pm Concert Hall	FIREBIRD MOTEL <i>(David Conte)</i> In English	Director: Heather Mathews Conductor: Curt Pajer	-Nova (Mezzo-Soprano) -Julie (Soprano) -Corina (Soprano) -Ivan (Tenor or Baritone) -Trooper (Baritone) -SATB Chorus
ENS 505 Musical Theatre Performance	Saturday February 27th 7:30 pm & Sunday February 28th 5:00 pm Concert Hall	SONDHEIM ON SONDHEIM <i>(Sondheim/Lapine)</i> In English	Director: Michael Mohammed Music Director: Michael Horsley	Flexible casting, material will be assigned as appropriate to the specific performers
ENS 513 Spring Opera	Friday March 26th 7:30 pm & Sunday March 28th 2:00 pm Concert Hall	DIE FLEDERMAUS <i>(Johann Strauss)</i> <i>(Lyrics by Marcie Stapp)</i> <i>(Dialogue by Jose Maria</i> <i>Condemi)</i> In English	Director: Jose Maria Condemi Conductor: Curt Pajer	-Gabriel von Eisenstein (Tenor or Baritone) -Rosalinde (Soprano) -Adele (Soprano) -Ida (Soprano) -Alfred (Tenor) -Dr Falke (Baritone) -Dr Blind (Tenor) -Frank (Baritone) -Orlofsky (Mezzo-soprano or countertenor) -Yvan (Speaking role) -Frosch (Speaking role) -SATB Chorus
ENS 510 Chamber Opera	Thursday May 6th & Friday May 7th 7:30 pm Concert Hall	LILITH <i>(Anthony Davis/Alan Havis)</i> WORLD PREMIERE! In English	Director: Heather Mathews Conductor: Curt Pajer	-Lilith/Claire (Soprano) -Eve/Eppy (Soprano or Mezzo-Soprano) -Adam/Arnold (Tenor) -The Angel (Baritone or Bass-Baritone) -Earl (Lyric Soprano or Mezzo-Soprano)
ENS 504 Musical Theatre Workshop	Friday May 14th 7:30 pm Recital Hall	MUSICAL THEATRE SHOWCASE	Director: Michael Mohammed Music Director: Lauren Mayer	Theme and repertoire TBD

AUDITION INFORMATION

GENERAL

- **For the 2020-21 academic year, any students interested in taking part in Opera and Musical Theatre ensembles will be required to submit a pre-recorded audition video which must be created following the parameters listed below.**
- **PLEASE NOTE THAT SFCM MAY ALSO OFFER AN IN-PERSON, LIVE AUDITION OPTION AT A LATER DATE. If such option is confirmed, those who choose it will still be required to send a pre-recorded video and other necessary materials, as indicated below. A live, in-person audition (if ultimately offered) is not required, the video submission is!**
- All participants must complete the online Opera/Musical Theatre Audition form, which we will send to the student's SFCM E-mail address a few days before it is due.
- We will also require a current headshot with the student's name clearly written on it.

DEADLINES

- **Monday, September 14th:** to complete the online Google audition form, which you will receive from us a few days before the deadline.
- **Friday, September 18th:** to upload the final audition video and headshot and to share them with us via Google Drive (specific details below).

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

These requirements apply to both pre-recorded video audition and, should SFCM confirm them, to live, in-person auditions.

IF AUDITIONING FOR OPERA ONLY:

- Two arias of contrasting styles. One must be in Italian, German, French or Russian. The other one must be in English.
- Undergraduate students may substitute an art song in place of one aria.
- **Please choose repertoire that is suitable or similar to the roles you would like to be considered for (which you will be listing in the audition form). The Opera Faculty is not available to provide audition repertoire suggestions. Please address those questions to your voice teacher or vocal coach, who know about your current or potential vocal abilities best.**
- If offering arias from Die Fledermaus, we are open to hearing them in either English or German. You may, but are not required to, offer excerpts from Firebird Motel or Lilith.

IF AUDITIONING FOR OPERA & MUSICAL THEATRE:

- Two arias of contrasting styles. One must be in Italian, German, French or Russian. The other one must be in English.
- A third piece from the Musical Theatre canon, in English. Pieces by Stephen Sondheim are highly recommended but not required.

IF AUDITIONING FOR MUSICAL THEATRE ONLY:

- Two contrasting songs from the Musical Theatre canon, in English. Pieces by Stephen Sondheim are highly recommended but not required.

FOR EVERYONE AUDITIONING:

- A **short** (less than 2 minutes) monologue in English which showcases the student's present acting and English language skills. Students may write their own monologues, either dramatic or comedic, or they can find one at sources such as: www.monologueblogger.com/category/under-1-minute-monologues/
- As reference, here is a link to last year's Acting Class Tiny Dorm concert, which showcased monologues and scenes https://youtu.be/U2P4s_-DaFQ

REQUIREMENTS AND TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR AUDITION VIDEO

(The following section is based on an Opera America Audition Task Force handout, adapted for SFCM's own process. We are grateful for this information shared by our industry colleagues!)

Below you will find requirements and recommendations for the creation of your pre-recorded audition videos. We recognize (and so should you) that in no way does a recorded audition replace or replicate the live experience, but in the immediate term, that may be all that is available to us.

It is likely that your audition recording will be created while you are in some form of quarantine. These guidelines are intended to help you navigate the process, with full understanding of the constraints of this unusual situation.

General

- Work with what you have, and trust that what you have will be okay.
- Submit your best work as available at the time of your audition.
- Follow the rules for submission strictly. If you have questions, write to opera@sfc.edu.
- Because of the nature of our ensemble work, only video recordings will be accepted (that is: no audio-only recordings).
- Practice makes perfect: plan to do a few rehearsal recordings. Do short takes to check how everything looks. Consider putting a mark on the floor where you stand and where you put the device so you can make educated adjustments during your rehearsal process. Make adjustments to lighting, recording settings, angle or camera placement. Check the product, make necessary changes and try again. This is very much a trial and error process!

- Share the rehearsal recordings with a trusted colleague/mentor and obtain their feedback on your work. Apply the comments and re-do if necessary
- All pieces should be performed from memory.
- All Opera material should be sung in the original key. Art song or Musical Theatre, please choose your own key.
- Please state your name at the start of your video. Speak clearly and slowly: “*My name is Lucy Smith*”. Announce each piece you will be offering. For example: “*I would like to begin with Quando m’ en vo from Puccini’s La Boheme*” or “*for my second piece, I will be singing Se vuol ballare, from Mozart’s Le Nozze di Figaro*” or “*this is a monologue from David Mamet’s Oleanna*”.
- Please remember that the dramatic/theatrical presentation is as important as your vocal performance. You are auditioning for a role in an opera or a musical, not for a Voice program or for a recital!
- **Each audition piece (aria, song, monologue) should be recorded in one uninterrupted take. We will not accept “patchwork” videos that combine several takes into one. However, we do require a separate video file for each of your audition items, clearly labeled following the naming rule below.**

Accompaniment

- The students may use pre-recorded accompaniment tracks, from sources such as Appcompanionist, Sheet Music Plus or others, or custom-made tracks by your coach/accompanist. For Firebird Motel, Fledermaus and Lilith, we are also providing you with prerecorded piano tracks (see details below). In the case of Fledermaus, you may find it easier to use Appcompanionist tracks so that you can control tempi, rubato and fermatas.
<https://www.appcompanionist.com>
<https://www.sheetmusicplus.com/>
- If you record with a live pianist, make sure the microphone placement allows for optimal sound quality for both voice and piano.
- This folder contains useful audition materials, including piano tracks and audition excerpts scores for Firebird Motel and Die Fledermaus. It also has the full piano score of the English translation of Die Fledermaus, by Marcie Stapp, that we will be using. In the coming days, we will be adding audition excerpts and piano tracks for Lilith. Please checking the folder periodically, if interested in those.
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12x4TDmRFgBNnq4nEH7gFx2Hsp0uHqMht?usp=sharing>
- Unaccompanied recordings are acceptable but not preferred. Students may also accompany themselves.

Audio

- Consider the acoustics of the room you are planning to record in. Experiment with your recording location and realize that the best place to get a clear quality recording may not be in a typically resonant space where you enjoy performing. It’s a bit counterintuitive to our performing and listening habits for live opera.
- A single source recording (video and audio captured together from one recording device) can be very successful and is absolutely acceptable!

- That said, audio quality will be higher if your set-up has an audio recorder or microphone separate from the video recording device. Please note this will require additional editing or post-production (you will need to edit the audio and the video together after recording both.)
- It is acceptable for the students to use an earbud during recording. No large or over-the-head headphones, please!
- If possible, test the equalizer (EQ) settings on all recording equipment to eliminate extraneous noises. A quick summary of the three main parameters of an equalizer is:
 - Gain:** How much you are boosting or cutting a certain frequency
 - Frequency:** What part of the sound (highs, lows, or mids) you want to make changes to.
 - Q:** Stands for Quality. How much of the surrounding frequencies you want to affect.
- Your audio recording device (microphone, laptop or phone) should be omni-directional. In general, a newer phone/laptop is going to be of a better quality, but there is a huge range of technology out there. Use the best of what is available to you. It's okay if that is just your phone.
- If you record in a room with a live or "boomy" acoustic, be sure to check that the audio is clear. If text and diction gets lost in the reverb of the space, please consider recording in a different space.
- Please check the Opera America website for video and recording equipment recommendations: <https://www.operaamerica.org/content/about/artists.aspx>

Video

- If using a phone or tablet camera, be sure to film horizontally, not vertically (landscape, not portrait).
- Your camera should be placed in a fixed position and at a level similar to where faculty would normally be seated during a standard audition. Do not use several cameras, but one well-placed camera. Use a tripod, if available.
- The camera should capture at least the upper $\frac{2}{3}$ of your body. Your facial expressions should be very clear but also use your whole body to "tell a story".
- If possible, record in a neutral environment that gives you room to use your body freely, without lots of distractions in the frame. Unusual spaces are acceptable provided they add to your presentation and not detract from it.

Lighting

- It's best for the light source to hit the performer from high and above (think of a spotlight on stage). Backlighting or side-lighting creates shadows.
- If the light can come from eye or forehead level (around 40 degrees), this adds a natural spill that will accent the face.
- Natural light is generally preferred. When in doubt, face a window, rather than performing with your back to it.
- If you must perform with your back to a window, be sure to add an extra lighting source from the front. Not only will it balance backlighting, but it will help your camera's auto settings which sometimes shift and try to adjust mid performance.

Editing/Post-Production

- Properly trim your video (beginning and end) so that the final product shows only your introduction and performance. Do not include extraneous footage of you setting up your camera or turning it off at the end. Aim to be as professional as you can, even within your limited technical knowledge.
- There are several free, open-source video editing software programs that offer some audio editing or improving functions as well: **Blender, Light Works, Shotcut, GarageBand.**
- An .mp4 file (the highest quality) is preferred. Additionally, .mov or .flv are acceptable.
- A free program to convert video files between formats is Handbrake: <https://handbrake.fr>

HOW TO SHARE YOUR AUDITION VIDEO WITH US

- Watch each audition video one last time to make sure there are not issues with them (sound quality, synchronization, etc.) Make final changes, if necessary.
- Save or rename each video using the following formula: “**Last. First.Title**” or “**Last. First.Role**” or “**Last.First.Opera**”. For example: a singer named Lucy Smith who has recorded Musetta’s “Quando m’en vo” from La Boheme would save her file as: “Smith. Lucy. Quando m’en vo” or “Smith.Lucy.Musetta” or “Smith.Lucy.La Boheme”. If offering an art or a musical theatre song, she would label it something like “Smith.Lucy.Caro Mio Ben” or “Smith.Lucy.Being Alive”
- Your videos are likely to be quite large in size. To ensure that they do not get rejected by media servers and that we receive it, there are two parts to the submission process:
- First, **you must upload your videos to your own Google Drive.** If you are a returning student, your SFCM E-mail address is a Gmail one so it is already tied to Google Drive. Please make sure you are logged in with your SFCM E-mail before attempting to upload the video. **If you are a new student, you will need access to your SFCM-assigned E-mail address first.**
- After your audition videos are uploaded to your own Google Drive, then **you must share it with us.** Please share it to opera@sfc.edu. Details about the two-part process can be found here: <https://www.wikihow.com/Share-Large-Files-on-Google-Drive>
- Please do not attempt to E-mail us the video files as the E-mail server will most likely reject it due to its size!

HOW TO SHARE YOUR HEADSHOT VIDEO WITH US

Follow the same steps indicated above to share your headshot and make sure your photo has your name clearly written on it. Save the file it using the rule “Last.First.Headshot” Following the previous example, the file would be “Smith.Lucy.Headshot”

GOT QUESTIONS?

- General audition or program questions: write to opera@sfc.edu
- Musical Theatre specific questions: write to Professor Michael Mohammed at mmohammed@sfc.edu
- New students with questions related to your SFCM E-mail addresses: write to the SFCM staffer who has been handling your Admission or Orientation process.
- Questions about vocal suitability of your audition material or our repertoire: write to your current or SFCM Voice teacher.

SFCM HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE
Audition information for Baroque Ensemble and other
Historical Performance opportunities for voice majors
SFCM, 2020-2021

The SFCM Historical Performance program major production for 2020-2021 will be Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*.

The opera will be double cast and performed on April 17 and 18, 2021 in collaboration with the period instrument SFCM Baroque Ensemble. There are important parts for all voice types. **All SFCM voice students are enthusiastically encouraged to audition**, no prior experience in singing baroque music is necessary.

Deadlines:

Monday Sept 14: to complete online Google audition form

Friday Sept 18: to upload the final audition video and headshot and share them with us via Google Drive.

Audition requirement: Any baroque aria from an opera or oratorio or cantata that you love to sing. Memorization is encouraged but not required. Auditions will be by submitted video recordings. An accompanied performance, either with pre-recorded or live accompaniment is preferred, but unaccompanied performance will also be accepted. A short form to be filled out by the student will be sent several days prior to the audition to your SFCM email account. Any questions of any kind please do not hesitate to contact us at cjamason@sfc.edu

Guidelines for video submission:

- 1) Save and name video as follows “Last name _ First name _ Piece title”
- 2) Upload your videos and/or audition form to your own Google Drive using your SFCM account.
- 3) Once your videos are uploaded to your own Google Drive you will need to share it with us. Please share it to cjamason@sfc.edu

The opera will be prepared in both fall and spring semesters during Baroque Ensemble-Vocal section class meetings on Fridays from 1:00-2:50pm. Additional small group coachings and diction sessions are scheduled throughout both semesters. Cast members will also perform in the fall semester Beethoven Lied festival programs (see below for Beethoven project details)

Beethoven Lied mini-festival:

A two-part event in celebration of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth. Historical Performance will present two programs exploring rarely heard songs composed by Beethoven: solo songs, vocal duets and trios from *Eight Songs*, op 52 (1790-96), *Six Songs*, op 75 (1809), *Four Ariettas and a Duet* (1809), *Three Songs*, op. 83 (1810), and arrangements of Scottish and Irish folk songs for voice, violin, cello and piano (1810-1818). Performances will be Sunday, November 1 and Saturday, November 14, 2020

Other Historical Performance related courses offered in Fall 2020:

All graduate level students interested in singing baroque music are encouraged to enroll in **MHL 733, Baroque Performance Practice**, this course is designed to explore baroque improvisation and many other crucial issues relating to singing baroque music.

ENS 212 Continuo Playing and Improvisation is an ensemble course directly exploring baroque improvisation and other performance practice topics in weekly in-class performances and coachings.

NEW COURSE: MHL 546: 'Seeing Ourselves' (undergrad and grad students). This course will examine images of musicians from the beginning of music history to the digital age, using the study of art history as well as advertising to learn important lessons about the place of musicians in society. An overview of the history of advertising will include an examination of how images influence us. We will investigate how our publicity images today relate to strategies in modern advertising as well as historical images of musicians in paintings on subjects such as Orpheus, St. Cecilia, Apollo and Marysas, the Muses, as well as paintings and photographs of celebrated musicians from the Baroque era to the present. We will seek insights as to how we portray ourselves today, how the status of musicians has and has not changed over the course of history, and how we are seen by others in publicity images online and in print.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions about Baroque Ensemble or other Historical Performances courses:

Corey Jamason: cjamason@sfc.edu