

Update on Voice and Opera alumni, January 2025

The UW–Madison Voice and Opera programs have been successful for decades in training young singers, educators, and conductors who are enjoying careers involving a variety of musical endeavors across Wisconsin and around the world.

Leigh Akin (BM 2010) is a singer, actress, and illustrator currently living in New York City, and singing primarily oratorio and sacred music. She has performed with The Bronx Opera and OperaRox NYC. <https://www.leighellenakin.com/>

Emily Birsan (MM 2010) has performed leading roles at the Chicago Lyric Opera, Welsh National Opera, Edinburgh International Festival, Boston Lyric Opera, Madison Opera and concert performances at Carnegie Hall, BBC Symphony, Ravinia Festival, Grant Park Symphony, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and the Chicago Philharmonic. Birsan has recorded Elgar's oratorio, *The Saga of St. Olaf*, with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Sir Andrew Davis. Emily was a recipient of the Collins Fellowship. <http://www.emilybirsan.com/>

Karen Bishop (MM 2008, DMA 2011) focused her research and performance on unpublished songs of American composers. Her first volume of songs by Ernst Bacon was published by Classical Vocal Reprints and showcased at the National NATS Convention in 2013. She edited a volume of songs by John Duke, and a subsequent article was published in the NATS Journal. She presented a lecture on her work at the International Congress of Voice Teachers in Brisbane.

Sarah Brailey (MM 2007, DMA 2021) [See faculty bio.](#)

Joel Burcham (DMA 2009) made his professional operatic debut as Lindoro in *L'Italiana in Algeri* for Central City Opera. He has sung with Madison Opera, Utah Opera, Opera Omaha, Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre, and Opera Fort Collins and the Utah, Omaha and Madison Symphonies. He currently serves as Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Oklahoma School of Music, and previously served on the voice faculties of the University of Colorado-Boulder and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Melanie Cain (MM 2003, DMA 2005) is artistic director and founder of Fresco Opera Theatre and owner of Maven Vocal Arts. She served on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Teachers of Singing and as Co-Director of The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Wisconsin District.

Anthony Cao (BM-Ed 2002, MM-Ed 2010) has been the Director of Choirs at Madison West High School since 2004. He teaches Freshman Chorale, Treble Choir, Concert Choir, Popular Vocal Styles, History of American Popular Music, and Hip Hop Studies. Cao has worked as guest clinician/composer with choirs throughout Wisconsin and the Midwest. Equally comfortable in many genres of music, he stays active as a pianist/vocalist, including his all-request show every week at The Ivory Room. He served as artistic director of Madison Chamber Choir, and has been chorus master of Madison Opera since 2010.

Caitlin Cisler (MM 2009) made her professional debut headlining as Cunegonde in *Candide* with Four Seasons Theatre in Madison. In concert, she most recently appeared with the Great Falls Symphony in Barber's *Knoxville Summer of 1915*. Caitlin has appeared with Madison Opera, Tacoma Opera, the Dayton Philharmonic, and the Missoula Symphony Orchestra. In 2018, she debuted the role of the Queen in *Queen of the Night*, Jordan Jenkins' prequel to *The Magic Flute*. She is a published researcher in vocal health and the effects of singing on the immune system and teaches voice in Missoula, Montana. <https://www.caitlincisler.com/>

Jennifer D'Agostino (DMA 2011) teaches voice, vocal pedagogy, and graduate seminars in opera and song literature at Georgia Southern University. She is on the board of the New York Singing Teachers' Association (NYSTA) and is the Editor-In-Chief of VOICEPrints, NYSTA's scholarly journal. She was an active board member for Knoxville Opera, where she recently served as the Chair of the 2022 Rossini Festival. She has presented at the Lilly Conference, NATS Conferences, and the National Collegiate Honors Conference. She has held teaching positions at Alverno College, Beloit College, Pellissippi State Technical Community College, Walsh University, and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

Ariana Douglas (BM 2013) enjoyed recent triumph as Daniele in Stradella's *La Susanna* with Opera Lafayette and Heartbeat Opera. She has appeared with Rockford Symphony in Haydn's *Paukenmesse*, created the roles of Girlfriend #1 and the Nurse in Glimmerglass Opera's workshops of Jennine Tesori's *Blue*, and performed Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Florentine Opera. Ms. Douglas has been honored three times by the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, once as a District Winner for Wisconsin, two-Encouragement Awards, as well as the winner of the Josephine L. LiPuma Casa Italia award.

Emily Eagen (MM 1999) received a Fulbright Scholarship to attend the Royal Conservatory of the Hague. She was a co-founder of the M6: Meredith Monk Third

Generation, an ensemble that works closely with Monk to prepare and perform her works. She serves on the faculty at the Amherst Early Music Festival, and she has toured with the contemporary ensemble Bang on a Can for their production of Julia Wolfe's *Steel Hammer*. She is a teaching artist for Carnegie Hall, where she teaches songwriting workshops, in particular to young mothers who learn to write lullabies for their children. She is co-composer of "NOOMA", an opera for babies, premiered at Carnegie Hall in April 2019. The opera premiered at Minnesota Opera later that year, with additional performances set for the San Francisco Opera in a future season.

<https://www.emilyeagen.com/>

Steven Ebel (BM 2001) has sung with companies including New York City Opera, Opera Cleveland, and Opera Delaware. The winner of 2nd Grand Prize at the 2007 Montreal International Vocal Competition, he made his Covent Garden debut and was a member of the Royal Opera House Jette Parker Young Artist Programme from 2009 to 2011. Afterwards he joined the ensemble at the Badisches Staatstheater in Karlsruhe and later the Staatstheater Mainz. He has also sung guest engagements in the USA, UK, Chile, Italy, Russia, France and at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Netherlands. He is also an accomplished composer and studied with Prof. Wolfgang Rihm at the Hochschule für Musik in Karlsruhe, Germany. <https://www.stevenebel.com/bio>

Lydia Eiche (BM 2014) is an opera singer and actress based in Milwaukee. She has performed with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Skylight Music Theatre, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, Third Avenue Playhouse, All In Productions, First Stage Children's Theatre, Sunset Playhouse, Waukesha Civic Theatre; Soulstice Theatre; Haylofters; Boulevard Theatre; Capital City Theatre; Forte Theatre Company, Opera Orvieto, and the Miami Music Festival. <https://lydiaroseeiche.com/>

Mark Ensley, coach and conductor, received his MM in opera coaching and served on the faculty of University of Memphis. He currently serves as Minister of Worship and Community at Lindenwood CC in Memphis, TN.

Olivia Ferguson (MM 2013) is teaching private voice and piano students in the Detroit area, accompanying for schools, and substitute teaching. She has worked the past two summers as a volunteer in a church mission program in Brazil, teaching voice classes and lessons.

Saira Frank (MM 2009) has performed roles with Madison Opera, Pacific Opera Project, and Elgin Opera, and been a featured soloist with the Grant Park Symphony Chorus, the Florentine Opera, and Opera San Luis Obispo. Saira's passion for building opera's audience led her to perform with Opera for the Young in seven productions and spend two years as resident teaching artist for Madison Opera. In addition to

performing, Saira also serves as Managing Director for Opera for the Young and is a member of the voice faculty at Carroll University.

Abbie Furmansky has sung leading roles throughout Europe and the United States at New York City Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Washington National Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, Oper Frankfurt, de Nederlandse Opera and the Baden-Baden Festival. Her discography includes the BMG recording of the opera *La Favorita*, the DVD of the Nikolaus Lehnhoff directed *Parsifal* conducted by Kent Nagano, Bernstein's *Kaddish Symphony* released on Nimbus Records, and in 2023 the brand new release of *Mattinata* on Orpheus Classical label. <http://abbiefurmansky.net/>

David Gagnon was in the Broadway cast of *Les Miserables* for four years, performed in *Forever Plaid* in Chicago, and toured with *Ragtime*.

Sara Gartland (BM 2002) is enjoying an international career in opera, concert and song repertoire, including leading roles with Semperoper Dresden, Calgary Opera, Atlanta Opera, and Dallas Opera. <https://www.saragartland.com>

Cooper Grodin (BM 2002) is an avid singer of all genres and an accomplished pianist, composer, and music director. Recently he performed *Evita* at Vancouver Opera, was seen in the Atlantic Theater Company's reading of *The Band's Visit* and the site specific concert version of *Ragtime* on Ellis Island with Brian Stokes Mitchell. Cooper has sung numerous concerts with the New York Philharmonic, Brooklyn Philharmonic, and The American Symphony Orchestra. He performed in the New York premiere of *Grendel* at City Opera directed by Julie Taymor, and *Zaide* as part of the Mostly Mozart Festival directed by Peter Sellars. He made his Carnegie Hall debut in Paul McCartney's *Ecce Cor Meum*. His new original album *It's The Little Things* is now available on iTunes. Cooper is a member of Actors' Equity and is signed with About Artists Agency.

Jamie-Rose Guarrine (MM 2003, DMA 2005) has performed with the Minnesota Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Kentucky Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Anchorage Opera, Opera Fairbanks, Utah Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and with St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and Bach aria group, National Symphony Orchestra, and Orquestra Sinfonica Nacional de Costa Rica. Dr. Guarrine's debut album, *Transparent Boundaries: Songs Set to the Words of Dickinson, Whitman & Emerson*, featuring newly commissioned works by Lori Laitman, Daron Hagen, and Scott Gendel. She serves as Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. <https://www.jamieroseguarrine.com/>

Samus Haddad (MM 2009) has been an apprentice artist at Central City and the Sarasota Opera. He was the recipient of a Collins Fellowship.

Sam Handley (MM 2001) performed more than a dozen roles as a member of Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center, and has returned to perform with the company in subsequent years. He has appeared with the Santa Fe Opera, Castleton Festival, San Francisco Opera, Lexington Symphony, Opera Colorado, Theater Aachen, Houston's Mercury Baroque, and the National Symphony. His commercial recordings include Argento's *Casanova's Homecoming* and the DVD of *P. D. Q. Bach in Houston: We Have a Problem*. www.samhandleybassbaritone.com

Charlotte Hellekant has sung major opera roles at the Chicago Lyric, Metropolitan Opera, Paris Opera Bastille, the Salzburg Festival, Santa Fe, and Glimmerglass.

Scott Johnson (MM 2009) was a young artist with the Florentine Opera in Milwaukee after two summers as an apprentice artist in Central City, Colorado.

Hein Jung (MM 2002, DMA 2006) is a Professor of Voice and Director of Vocal Studies at the University of Tampa. Recent performances include recitals with the Sarasota Artist Series and guest soloist with the Sarasota Chopin Festival, Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* with the University of Florida-Gainesville, Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with St. Petersburg Opera, and concerts in Tampa and Illinois for the New Music Festival. Her recording of Liszt songs was released on Centaur Records in 2013. A recipient of a Collins Fellowship at UW-Madison, she was also a Fellow at Tanglewood, and an apprentice in the Merola Opera Program. <http://www.heinjung.com>

Miranda Kettlewell (BM 2020) recently won the Minnesota District Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and will compete in the upcoming Upper Midwest Regional competition. Miranda was the 2019 first prize recipient at the Schubert Club competition in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She has performed with Minnesota Opera, Lakes Area Music Festival, Orpheus Music Project, and more.

Dan Plummer Koehn (BM 1997, DMA 2003) was general director of Opera for the Young for many years, and also served as Director of New Initiatives & Special Projects at Florida Grand Opera. He is currently Alumni Relations Director for Student Affairs Advancement at UW-Madison.

Tenor **James Kryshak** (MM 2009) recently created the role of Hitler in Alexander Raskatov's opera, *GerMANIA* for the World Premiere at Opera de Lyon in France. He has also been seen in several roles with Deutsche Oper Berlin (including Monostatos, Spoletta, and the Teacher in *Lady MacBeth* and most recently as Rodriguez in a new

production of *Don Quichotte*) where he has been an ensemble member from 2016. Other highlights from the season include a return to Lyon as Christobald in Schreker's *Irrelohe* and two house debuts in Spring 2021 including *La Monnaie de Munt* and Bergen National Opera. <https://www.jamesnkryshak.com/>

Amanda Lauricella (DMA 2021) toured with Opera for the Young in 2022-23 as Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* and in their 2023-24 production of *Beauty and the Beast*. She served on the voice faculties at Beloit College and Viterbo University in 2021-22 and is currently serving on the faculties at Beloit College and Carroll University.

Thomas Leighton most recently appeared as Kaspar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with Kyrenia Opera in New York City. Previous theatrical credits include a 29-Hours reading of the new musical, *Mars: 2076*, Monostatos in *The Magic Flute* with the Florentine Opera, and Spoletta in *Tosca* with Nashville Opera. Concert appearances include *Carmina Burana* with the Madison Symphony and Bruckner's *Te Deum* with the Milwaukee Symphony. A devoted interpreter of new music, Mr. Leighton has made numerous appearances with Milwaukee's "Present Music," as well as the world premiere of Julia Adolphe's *Sylvia* at NYC's Bargemusic. When not portraying goofballs and villains onstage, he can be heard in commercials and song parodies on iHeart Radio airwaves, and entertaining nightly in bars along the Jersey Shore.

Juan Tomás Martínez (BA 1988) enjoys an extensive international career as a singer of opera, zarzuela, oratorio, recitals and musicals. In 1995 he won the Latin-American Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition. His operatic career has taken him to Perú, Ecuador, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Rumania, Bulgaria and Korea. Most recently he has appeared as The Pastor in *La rosa del azafrán* and Rodrigo in Verdi's *Don Carlo* with Ópera de Colombia.

Ryan McEldowney (MM 2010) has been a full-time musician in the Catholic Archdiocese of Milwaukee since his graduation. He serves as Director of Music and Organist at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Parish as well as Director of Liturgical Music at St. Francis de Sales Seminary.

Jeffery McGhee (DMA 2006) is Professor of Voice at Roberts Wesleyan University. He has appeared as soloist with the Rochester Orchestra and the Rochester Oratorio Society, the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance* and the Counsel in *Trial by Jury* with Ohio Light Opera. He has presented a lecture-recital on spirituals at universities and churches around the country and at the 2017 NYSSMA Winter Conference. Dr. McGhee is currently in the final stages of completing a CD of hymns, spirituals, and spiritual songs.

Lindsey Meekhof (DMA 2022) was selected to be a Studio Artist with Madison Opera in 2022-23, making her company debut in their production of Salome. She has served on adjunct voice faculties at Saint Mary's College and Indiana University-South Bend. She currently works in the UW–Madison Division of Diversity, Equity, & Educational Achievement.

Ryan Nash (MM 2024), tenor, was selected to be a Studio Artist with Madison Opera for the 2024-25 season. He has toured with Opera for the Young as Tamino in The Magic Flute in their renowned outreach opera program.

Daniel O'Dea appears on multiple Grammy-nominated albums with acclaimed chamber choir The Crossing. He has performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Des Moines Metro Opera, Cedar Rapids Opera, Aspen Opera Theater and Opera Naples, Madison Choral Project, Opera for the Young, Madison Bach Musicians and Token Creek Music Festival.

Randy Pagel (MM in music education) conducts the Southern Nevada Musical Arts Society and directs the choirs at Thurman White Middle School in Las Vegas. He has won national competitions and performed at venues including Carnegie Hall and the White House, and has released recordings that include original works. His book, "The Choral Director's Guide to Sanity... and Success!" was published in 2004. He continues to conduct many honor choirs and music clinics around the country.

www.randypagel.com

Gerrod Pagenkopf (BM-Ed 2002) joined the ensemble Chanticleer in spring 2016. Mr. Pagenkopf is a core artist with Grammy-nominated Ars Lyrica Houston, and has performed with Mercury Baroque, the Bach Society of Houston, the Houston Chamber Choir, the Bel Canto Chorus of Milwaukee, Masterworks Chorale of Boston, Exsultemus, Ensemble Altera, Schola Cantorum, and La Donna Musicale.

Amanda Poulson (BM 1998) has pursued a career as performer, dancer, choreographer, and director. After graduation she moved to New York City and performed in cabarets, BMI Workshops, appeared on stage at Radio City Music Hall with the band Smash Mouth and was featured in several performances with the Broadway Dance Center. She has both performed in and directed musical theatre productions, and has been featured in radio jingles, voice overs and commercials. Amanda currently serves as the Cruise Director on the Azamara Quest.
<https://www.amandapoulson.com/>

Shannon Prickett (MM 2013) is an alum of the Resident Artist Program at Minnesota Opera. In 2012, Shannon performed the title role of Suor Angelica with Opera Siena in

Italy, and won first place at the Iowa District Metropolitan National Council Opera Auditions, advancing to the regional competition in Saint Paul, MN, where she received third place. She has appeared with the Minnesota Opera's 2013-2104 as Micaela in *Carmen*, The Sandman in *Hansel and Gretel*, Giannetta in *L'elisir d'amore*, and Dora in *The Manchurian Candidate*.

Anja Pustaver (MM 2020) was selected to be a Studio Artist with Madison Opera for the 2021-22 season where she performed Minerva in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and in the ensemble of *She Loves Me*, and *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Fabian Qamar (MM 2016) serves as Director of the Sheboygan Area Youth Symphony Sinfonia Orchestra and as Associate Director of Sacred Music at St. Stanislaus Oratory in Milwaukee. A multi-instrumentalist, Fabian plays piano, viola, guitar, and church organ, with additional experience in percussion and horn, and he is also an established singer. He enjoys creating music as a composer, arranger, and improviser. His projects include playing and singing in the jazz trio Jive Safely, and he teaches voice, strings, and piano privately.

Brenda Rae (BM 2004) is enjoying international operatic stardom. This season marks her long-awaited return to Oper Frankfurt as Lulu, as well as Aminta in *Die schweigsame Frau* for Staatsoper Unter den Linder. Brenda returns to the role of Gilda in *Rigoletto* both for Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Opernhaus Zürich. A 2021 winner of the Beverly Sills Award, she made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 2020 as Poppea in Handel's *Agrippina*, and at the Chicago Lyric Opera in 2019 in the role of Ginevra in *Ariodante*. Recent debuts include Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Edinburgh International Festival and the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* at London's Royal Opera House. In the 2021-2022 season, she returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Zerbinetta and as Ophelia in Brett Dean's *Hamlet*.
<http://www.brendarae.com/>

Rachel Renee enjoys a career in film, tv, radio, voiceover work, theater, and opera. She has taught private voice lessons at music conservatories in Los Angeles, California and Madison. She currently teaches drama, piano, on camera and voice at Kenosha Academy of Dance. <http://www.rachelrenee.com/>

Kitt Reuter-Foss (BM 1979, MM 1982) has sung with the Metropolitan Opera, Florentine Opera, Atlanta Opera, Pine Mountain Festival, Madison Opera, and Children's Theatre of Madison.

Cayla Rosché (MM 2018, DMA 2020) was awarded a Fulbright Arctic Scholar Grant for fall 2022, and taught diction, voice and master classes at the Iceland University for the Arts in Reykjavik, as well as continuing her research on Icelandic song repertoire. She was awarded an American-Scandinavian Foundation grant in support of her research on Icelandic repertoire and diction. She has served on the voice faculties at UW-Oshkosh and Edgewood College, and currently serves on the voice faculty at Lawrence University.

Julia Rottmayer (BM 2003) [See faculty bio.](#)

Joshua Sanders (BM 2015) joined the Ensemble at Staatstheater Wiesbaden for the 2024-2025 season, singing Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Steuermann in *Der fliegende Holländer*, Spoletta in *Tosca*, 1st Priest/Armored Guard in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Facio in Offenbach's rarely heard operetta *Fantasio*. In 2022, Mr. Sanders joined the roster of The Metropolitan Opera for Robert Carsen's production of *Der Rosenkavalier*. This season, he debuts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra as Victorin in Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*, conducted by Andris Nelsons.
<https://www.joshuasanderstenor.com/>

Greg Schmidt made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the role of Arbace in Mozart's *Idomeneo*. His professional debut with Washington D.C. Opera was in the role of Belfiore in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera*, and he returned to the Kennedy Center the following season as Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. Schmidt has performed leading roles with Tacoma Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Chattanooga Opera, Nevada Opera, Skylight Opera Theater, Nashville Opera, Opera Carolina, Skylight Opera and Madison Opera. In 2023 he appeared in *A Capacity for Evil* with Opera Las Vegas.

Jamie Schmidt, who was music assistant and coach for University Opera, directed musical productions at Pleasant Place in Chicago and New York City. He has toured with the Rockettes, was the assistant conductor for the Broadway revival of "Ragtime", and conducted Liza Minelli's national tour, and Associate Conductor on tour with "The Lion King".

Benjamin Schultz-Burkel (DMA 2012) is the author of *Singing in Polish: A Guide to Polish Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire*. Published in 2015 by Scarecrow Press, it is based on his doctoral research on this repertoire. He has taught as lecturer of voice at UW-Platteville and Beloit College and performed numerous roles with University Opera. He currently serves as Director of Faculty and Executive Recruitment for the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

Kristin Schwecke (MM 2010) made her orchestral debut as soprano soloist in “Carmina Burana” with the Cobb Symphony in Atlanta. On the operatic stage, Kristin’s highlights include La Contessa in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Hubbard Hall Opera Theater, First Lady in *The Magic Flute* with Piedmont Opera, Magda in *La Rondine* with the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute, Abigail in Robert Ward’s *The Crucible* with Piedmont Opera, and 2nd Sprite in *Rusalka* with North Carolina Opera, and as the title role in the World Premiere of Michael Ching’s opera *Anna Hunter* with The Savannah Voice Festival. She currently serves as adjunct faculty at Wake Forest University.
<https://music.wfu.edu/kristin-schwecke/>

Jessica Schwefel (MM 2005, DMA 2008). [See faculty bio.](#)

Anne Seaton had a decades-long career as a member of the Singing Sergeants in Washington D.C. and performed with them on numerous official occasions.

Christine Seitz has appeared with the Des Moines Metro Opera, Seattle Opera, Dallas Opera, Madison Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Toledo Opera, Kentucky Opera, Florentine Opera, Central City Opera, and in Europe with the Wuppertaler Bühnen and the Stadttheater Bern. She joined the faculty of University of Missouri-Columbia in 2008 where she served as Director of Show-Me Opera and a member of the voice faculty.

Justin Smith (DMA 2010) has engaged in a variety of artistic ventures as an administrator, performer, and teacher. He was Program Director for Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra, and served as Coordinator/Assistant to the Artistic Director at Des Moines Metro Opera for two seasons, coordinating main-stage, apprentice, and various outreach activities. Justin participated in the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.

Christiaan Smith-Kotlarek (BM 2008) has appeared with Madison Opera, Kentucky Opera, Ash Lawn Opera, Townsend Opera, Modern American Music Project, Cinnabar Opera, and as Gaston in the national tour of “Beauty and the Beast.” He also sang in the workshop of Jake Heggie’s opera, *Great Scott*, in collaboration with the Dallas Opera.

Antonio Souza (MM 2016) is an active performer and teacher in Fortaleza, Brazil. He most recently sang with the Ceará Nova Ensemble. He teaches classical singing in the new Municipal School of Music, the first of its kind in Fortaleza.

Nathaniel Stampley (BM 2008) has appeared in numerous Broadway productions including *CATS*, *The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess*, *The Color Purple* (original production and the revival), and *The Lion King*. He had the pleasure of playing “Mufasa” on the

West End in the Disney UK's *The Lion King*. National tours include *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* (Los Angeles NAACP Award nomination), *Ragtime* and *Orpheus Returns*. Off-Broadway performances include *Big Love* (Signature Theatre NY), *Fiorello!* and *Lost in the Stars* (NY City Center's Encores!), and *The First Noel* (Classical Theatre of Harlem) for which he received an AUDELCO Nomination.

<https://www.nathanielstampely.com/>

David Sytkowski (BM piano 2009), pianist and vocal coach, is a Visiting Artist in Residence at Bard College, where he is Director of Music for Opera Workshop, coaches singers, teaches private piano, and teaches Aural Skills. Recent engagements include the New York premiere of Gregory Spears's *Fellow Travelers* for the PROTOTYPE festival. He frequently appears as a symphony pianist and collaborator at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts.

Baritone **Ryan Thorn** (BM 2009) completed his MM in Voice at UCLA. He sang the role of Figaro in both *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Pacific Opera Project. He is an alum of the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, and Carnegie Hall's program "The Song Continues". Ryan was a resident artist at Portland Opera in 2016-17 and continues to perform with the company, most recently as The Officer in Philip Glass's *In the Penal Colony*.

<https://ryanthornbaritone.squarespace.com/>

Heather Thorpe (BM-Ed 1996) is the choir and general music teacher at Verona Area High School. Previously, she was the choir teacher at Badger Ridge Middle School in Verona. She has been a guest clinician, conductor, and teacher at many honors festivals, workshops, and camps throughout Wisconsin, and was recognized in 2000 as an outstanding teacher in the national edition of *Teaching Music* magazine in an article entitled "A Standing Ovation for Music Teachers". In 2004 she won the Herb Kohl Fellowship for excellence in education. She has also served as part of the Wisconsin School Music Association, Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance committee, and the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association Next Direction committee.

Matthew Tintes (MM 2008) is a private voice lesson instructor, performer, and choir director in the Twin Cities. For seven seasons, he was part of the internationally acclaimed men's vocal ensemble, *Cantus*. While with *Cantus*, Tintes recorded several albums, and appeared on various popular radio programs such as *A Prairie Home Companion*, and NPR's *Tiny Desk Concerts*.

Sachie Ueshima (DMA 2024), soprano, recently sang the title role in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* at Kentucky Opera and Virginia Opera, as well as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with

Madison Opera. She was selected as a Studio Artist with Madison Opera for the 2023-2024 season. Sachie received Second Place in Women in Art Song & Oratorio (Professional Division) of the American Prize in 2022. She was also honored to sing as a soloist at the opening mass of Festival Internazionale di Musica Sacra at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in 2015.

Jamie Van Eyck (DMA 2012) is Associate Professor of Voice and Vocal Studies Division Director at Baylor University. Dr. Van Eyck is a sought-after guest clinician and has recently given vocal workshops and master classes for organizations including Opera America, Red River Lyric Opera, Arizona State University, and the University of Memphis. She has been featured at the renowned Tanglewood Music Festival, Santa Fe Opera, Ojai Festival, Bard Music Festival, Princeton Festival, Toronto's Luminato Festival, Moscow's Golden Mask Festival, and the Grahamstown and FynArts Festivals in South Africa. She has been a soloist with many of the nation's top orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, American Symphony Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony, Utah Symphony, Lexington Philharmonic, Colorado Symphony, and Pacific Symphony.

Thomas Weis (DMA 2007) was an active voice teacher and performer at Carroll University in Waukesha, Wisconsin for twenty years offering recitals, master classes, and numerous faculty collaborations. Dr. Weis served as vocal coordinator and was honored to be the director of the Carroll University Men's Chorus, which he founded in the fall semester of 2014. Dr. Weis is a member of NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) and has served in various positions on the Wisconsin NATS board.

Wesley Dunnagan (DMA 2019) A specialist in concert and oratorio repertoire, Wesley Dunnagan has performed nationally and internationally, including with the San Juan Symphony, South Bend Lyric Opera, and Schola Cantorum (California). He currently serves on the voice faculty at St. Olaf College. <https://www.stolaf.edu/profile/dunnag1>

David Williams (DMA 1995) holds a JD from New York Law School. A fierce advocate for artists' rights, he left the corporate setting in 2015 to dedicate himself to this work full time focusing on completing his first book, *The Enterprising Musician's Guide to Performer Contracts* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017). His second book, *The Enterprising Musician's Legal Toolkit*, was published by Rowman & Littlefield in 2023. As a writer, he is a regular contributor to *Modern Singer Magazine*. He has been a faculty member at the Crane Institute for Music Business at SUNY Potsdam and the College of Performing Arts at The New School in New York City. An active guest lecturer, he has delivered talks on music industry law at Yale University, Tanglewood, Manhattan School of Music, New England Conservatory, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, among others.

Jordan Wilson (DMA 2014) completed his undergraduate and MM studies at the Eastman School of Music and taught at Roberts Wesleyan College. While a student at Madison, Jordan taught at Beloit College as well as serving as TA for the voice area, winning the Campus-Wide Teaching Award. He joined the faculty at Missouri Southern State University in 2014 as an Assistant Professor, and in 2018 joined the faculty at Wingate University, where he is an Associate Professor and Assistant Dean in the Honors College. He was granted a Spivey Fellowship from Wingate for 2022-23 to pursue his research and performance of Russian song repertoire.

Alumni have gone on to graduate studies at schools including The Juilliard School, Eastman School of Music, Manhattan School of Music, University of Michigan, University of Houston, Indiana University, Peabody, and Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.

Music educators with degrees from UW-Madison are successful in finding jobs at universities and K-12 programs throughout the nation. Our graduates are teaching at schools including University of Colorado-Boulder, Indiana University, Roberts Wesleyan, University of Vermont, University of Iowa, St. Olaf College, and Viterbo University, as well as being music and choral directors at elementary, middle and high schools throughout the state.

Other careers some of our music students have pursued include management, recording, coaching, voice therapy, music therapy, and arts administration.