

Project Report

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A Summer of Intensive Vocal Training: the Start of All

Due to a rolling-based admission and a highly competitive class, I was not able to attend my original objective, the AIMS in Graz program. However, the goal of immersing myself to vocal studies and foreign culture never changed. Alternatively, I attended two equally selective programs nationally and internationally, and achieved much more than I expected.

I first attended the Mikael Eliassen Voice Program as part of the annual Curtis Summerfest hosted by the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music. Each of the 25 singers in the program has his or her unique sound and I felt extremely privileged to be accepted into the program. Singers in this select program pursue activities focused on vocal artistry, surrounded by elite faculty from Curtis's renowned vocal studies department. Besides receiving voice lessons and coachings, singers in the program are largely self-directed, coming together as a group midday to observe or perform in a daily master class.

I worked privately with Mikael Eliassen, the artistic director of the Curtis Opera Theatre, Danielle Orlando, the Principal Opera Coach, and most importantly, Joan Patenaude-Yarnell, legendary soprano of the last century who I am still in contact with for occasional coachings in New York City. Ms. Patenaude-Yarnell has taught many talented singers and she is especially experienced with teaching countertenors, Antony Roth Costanzo, Bejun Metha, just to name a few, which makes her an extremely valuable resource for my vocal development.

It was a wonderful opportunity to get to sing for all the master teachers and connect with them through the Curtis Summerfest. I performed in the renowned Field Concert Hall in the Curtis Institute and the Perelman Theatre in the Kimmel Center, both of which excited me and inspired me to become a better singer and performer.



Sing-Out Concert in Field Concert Hall

The two weeks in Philadelphia led to a four-week immersion in Arezzo, Italy, where I attended the Oberlin in Italy program as an Emerging Artist. If Curtis Summerfest gave me the life of a student, Oberlin in Italy gave me the life of an opera professional. The program was hosted by the Oberlin College and Conservatory and was celebrating its 30th season. It combines language and musical study with Italian cultural immersion. I worked closely with not only a group of voice faculty from Oberlin, but also professional coaches, conductors, and stage directors who work regularly with Teatro Alla Scala, Los Angeles Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera.

I was casted in the chorus of Giacomo Puccini's *La Rondine*, and was assigned scene performance as Nirone in Claudio Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Due to credit-limit for my double majors at UVA, I did not have time to take any acting classes on Grounds, so the opera staging classes I took in Italy were my very first experience with acting in general. It was especially great that we were allowed to observe any production's staging if we found ourselves available and I learned so much from participating and observing the process of character learning and acting.



La Rondine Cast



Opera Scene Performance

Besides music-making, I also took my very first Italian class at the Accademia Britannica as part of the program. Language class is offered daily, consisting of knowledge that is equivalent to a semester of study in college. Being in the heart of Tuscany was an experience of

a lifetime and communicating with local people in their language not only built my confidence but also helped me better connect to the words in the music scores.

The summer programs I attended helped me tremendously with vocal technique, acting, and more importantly, how to approach and interpret music. I implemented the skills in my graduate school auditions and Distinguished Major Recital preparations and I have never been more excited about the next chapter after UVA.



My DMP Poster. Many pieces I am singing were learned during the summer programs.

I would like to thank the Miller Art Scholars for their financial support for me to have the opportunity of attending these life-changing educational programs. I would like to thank Prof. Patterson for her mentorship over the past year and thank you to all of the supporters of the Miller Arts Scholars program.