

UNT Opera

Policies and Production Handbook

2011-2012 Season

Season Productions and Opportunities:

UNT Opera Gala
UNT Symphony Orchestra
October 16, 2011, 4:00 pm, Winspear Performance Hall

Full Production – Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*
UNT Symphony Orchestra
Fridays, Nov. 11 and 18, 8:00; Sundays, Nov. 13 and 20, 3:00, Lyric Theater

Directors’ Scenes Program
Thursday, Dec. 1, time/place TBA

Performance (Heggie opera rep, date and time TBA)
Center for Contemporary Opera
New York City, NY
March, 2012 (exact dates TBA)

Full Production – Bellini’s *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*
UNT Concert Orchestra
Fridays, Mar. 2 and 9, 8:00; Sundays, Mar. 4 and 11, 3:00, Lyric Theater

Jake Heggie Scenes Program
Saturday, Apr. 21, 8:00, Lyric Theater

Summer Opera Workshop
First weekend in August, opera selection and performance dates
(TBA) watchfor announcement on website

Bravo or Brava! Congratulations on being cast in this year’s UNT Opera Season! We look forward to the many ways in which we will all work together to provide a top-quality learning and growing situation for you while producing top-quality entertainment for our opera audiences.

This handbook contains information and procedures that enable us to work together as a team. Please read thoroughly and take all appropriate actions.

Opera Staff:

Paula Homer, Director of Opera , paula.homer@unt.edu, 565-4654, 940-783-1483 (c)

Dr. Stephen Dubberly, Opera Music Director, Stephen.Dubberly@unt.edu ,
367-8770 (cell), 940-369-7707 (o)

Dr. David Cloutier, Assistant Music Director, 940-383-4146, 940-453-3050 (c)

Charlie Kim, TA, Rehearsal Accompanist, kuyachacha@gmail.com 760-887-
2291 (c)

Maria Bellanca, TA, Opera Assistant, mbellanc@gmail.com 716-307-3811

Communication

UNT Opera Website

www.music.unt.edu/opera

Good communication is key to working efficiently and smoothly as a team. UNT Opera website is THE official place for the dissemination of information. At the same time, information will be posted on the opera board located in the Murchison across from the opera office, room 144.

Email, cell phones, and landlines

In addition to the website, we often try to communicate with you via your email address, cell phone, or landline. You have included these on your audition form. However, if any of the information changes during the season please send an email of the change as soon as possible to Ms. Homer at paula.homer@unt.edu.

Auditions

See Website for:

Calendar of Auditions

Audition forms

Repertoire requirement

Accompanist information

Other general information and forms

Casting

If you are cast in an opera...

- 1) You must officially accept the role(s) in which you have been cast by initialing next to your name on the cast list posted on the MPAC opera board. This needs to be done by no later than the Friday of the first full week of classes.
- 2) If you have not registered for MUEN 3040 or 5040 you will be administratively added. Once added, you have 24 hours to pay for the course. Watch you MY.UNT.EDU account for the course to appear then pay for it immediately. Any one NOT registered for the course will be removed from their opera role.
- 3) Unless you are cast in a chorus role or a VERY small role, you are responsible for buying your own score. Please check the opera bulletin board for correct publisher and edition. Do not plan on using a library score unless approved by the Music Director, Dr. Dubberly.
- 4) Chorus members and very small roles will be provided scores. Pick these up at the first music rehearsal.

If you are not cast in an opera...

- 1) You will be dropped administratively and will receive a full refund.

Pre-casting

Once in a while, due to performance dates and opera choice, some or all the roles of the first opera of the season need to be pre-cast. The expectation is that all singers in pre-cast roles will be musically prepared at the beginning of the fall semester. There are no formal auditions for pre-casting. Casting will be based on the opera staff's existing knowledge of current students or on new students' entrance auditions.

Cover casting

“Covering” a role for a production means the singer is fully prepared musically and dramatically to step into a rehearsal on the spur of the moment without having full opportunities to work with coaches, director or other members of the cast. A ‘cover’ observes all coachings and stage rehearsals, works on his/her own at home and comes prepared “to do” if needed.

In the professional world of opera, there have been many cases of a new talent being “discovered” when a principal singer steps out of a role at the last minute (sickness, accident, attitude, etc.) and an unknown but very gifted and well-prepared ‘cover’ steps in. Covering a role can be both difficult and stressful – boring at one moment and *too* exciting at the next! It takes practice to be a good cover. It is a commitment of endurance, with few tangible rewards apart from recognition in the production program as a ‘cover’.

In general, because UNT Opera tries to double cast principal roles, we do not choose singers to ‘cover’ a role. However, there are opportunities to...

Understudy a role

If you have been approved to ‘understudy’ a role, you are welcome to attend all coachings of the role, regular or private staging rehearsals, and step into a rehearsal if called upon by the conductor or stage director. It is a prime opportunity to learn a complete role but, it is unlikely that an understudy will be asked to step into a performance.

Your ability to gain skill and knowledge is dependent upon your motivation, desire, and ambition. Please give this opportunity careful thought and consideration before accepting the responsibility. Once you do accept it, we expect your full commitment to it.

Double Casting

Being double-cast is both an advantage and a disadvantage. To get the most out of it you must discern your learning needs and devise ways to get the most out of rehearsals.

- 1) Establish a good working relationship with your operatic ‘doppelgänger’ (person cast in the same role with you). The more supportive you are of him/her, the more support you will feel when on stage.
- 2) Once the casts are established, cheer on the other cast while working to create community and team-building in your own cast.
- 3) You may choose to sit and watch the other cast work or you may ‘shadow’ the other cast either upstage of the blocking or off to the side if there is room
- 4) You are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances – NOT JUST THE ONES FOR YOUR CAST – unless otherwise released by the opera staff.
- 5) On performance nights, when the other cast is performing, wait near the ticket window at 5 minutes to curtain to receive a free ticket to sit in the house. (DO NOT try to enter the theatre from backstage – the house has reserved seating.)
- 6) Sharing rehearsal time: The stage director and conductor will assume that you and your double are amicably sharing equal amounts of the available rehearsal time. If there are problems, please make an appointment with Ms. Homer to discuss the matter.
- 7) If you are approved to be released from a rehearsal, let your double-cast partner know this as soon as you have approval.

Schedule

UNT Opera provides 2 types of schedules which are posted on the website and on the opera board in the MPAC.

A. Master Schedule

This is the general schedule for the entire semester. It tells you the days and time period we are rehearsing, working on crews, or performing. It is posted at the beginning of each semester.

B. Weekly Schedule

This is the specific, detailed schedule for each week. It tells when you are specifically called and for what function (rehearsal, crew, performance, costume measurement, etc.) It is posted by 2:00 on the previous Friday.

As a registered student in Opera Theatre MUEN 3040/5040 you are required to keep the scheduled class times and dates on the Master Schedule open until you see the Weekly Schedule. Any time you are NOT scheduled on the Weekly Schedule becomes your free time, but not until the weekly schedule is posted.

Regular Class times:

Monday 3:45-6:15 and 7:45-10:00

Wednesday 3:45-6:15

Thursday 4:15-6:15

Friday 2:15-6:15

Request for a Release from Rehearsal

We strongly encourage you to pursue outside performance engagements and to take part in those competitions and auditions that will enhance your development and assist you in reaching your career goals. At the same time, if you have accepted a role in an opera production, there is a responsibility attached to that commitment. Releases are a privilege, NOT A RIGHT, and must neither jeopardize performances nor disrupt the rehearsal process.

Any conflicts with the Master Schedule that you know of at the time of auditions should be listed on your audition form. Before casting you in a role, the opera faculty will have to decide that they can work around those listed conflicts. Alternatively, they will contact you to discuss concerns before offering the role.

For conflicts that may arise *after* you have been cast, please send a request for release stating the dates and reason for absence to BOTH Ms. Homer and Dr. Dubberly via emails. Do not make any commitments that could lead to a conflict with the opera schedule until you receive an email back from one or both faculty members. (Please do not rely on verbal agreements from any member of the opera faculty.)

Preparation

Music Preparation

You are ultimately responsible for being fully prepared at every stage of the rehearsal process. At the same time, we expect you to rely heavily on the opera faculty for your musical preparation and on your voice teacher for vocal preparation.

Please consult early and often with your voice teacher about the vocal challenges in your role. Your teacher is always welcome at coachings and rehearsals; he or she is an invaluable part of the team that is to help you succeed in your role.

The opera faculty will play an important part in your musical preparation. Please do not hesitate to request coachings for help with any aspect of the music and text. You are not expected to be completely familiar with a section before you coach it; but you *are* expected to master the material covered in your coaching and to make corrections as needed. In other words, you must not continue to make musical or linguistic mistakes after they have been addressed *the first time*. Obviously, the opera faculty will allow for a reasonable amount of trial and error as you attempt to integrate the many layers of work involved in learning a role. But we will not permit you to make a habit of singing wrong notes, wrong rhythms, or wrong words, and we will expect you to make tangible progress in every area of your musical preparation.

One very important goal of your musical preparation is to make sure you are ready for the first staging rehearsal. But your musical preparation is not done when staging begins. We will continue to pay close attention to your musical and vocal development as staging rehearsals proceed, and we will always be available for music coachings.

Dramatic Preparation

Staging rehearsals are without scores in hand. All music covered in a staging rehearsal must be memorized!

Depending on the opera and your specific role, there may be required written preparation which helps you develop character and analyze text. Ms. Homer will introduce this study and preparation. You are required to have a spiral notebook for this work.

Crews

UNT Opera productions are technically supported by student crews made up of all the singers cast in roles or chorus at the beginning of the year. (In addition, we have been fortunate in recent years to have some crew members from the department of Dance and Theatre Arts assist us in the areas of wardrobe and make-up.)

Main Season (Fall and Spring semesters)

Any singer cast in a named role in a full production will work on 2 crews during the main season. Any singer cast in *Opera Without Elephants* and in a chorus role is required to work on 2 crews during the main season. A singer who is cast in only chorus role(s) will work on 1 crew.

Summer Opera Workshop

Any and all singers involved in the Summer Opera Workshop production will work technically to support the production. Specific assignments will be made after the summer staging rehearsals begin.

The type of crews for each production are:

Lighting and Orchestra Pit Crew

Spot light operators

Properties Crew

Gathering crew

Prop run crew

Wardrobe/Make-up Crew

Deck Run Crew

Supertitles Crew

Hospitality Crew

See website for specific job descriptions of each crew. Each crew needs a 'head'. If you are interested in heading a crew, talk to Ms. Homer. Anyone heading a crew will only work one crew during the main season.

Heading a crew

Each crew needs a 'head'. If you would like to 'head' a crew please contact Ms. Homer at either 565-4654 or paula.homer@unt.edu by Friday of the first full week of fall classes. In your message or email please briefly state why you feel you are qualified for the position in which you are interested. Heads have full responsibility for the crew. They delegate work or personally do specific chores, and act as role models for the crew members. If you are selected as "head" of a crew, this will be your only crew assignment for the year.

Stage Management

Stage Manager and **Assistant Stage Manager**: The most important technical positions during the run of an opera are the Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager positions. Due to the level of leadership, responsibility, and time commitment, these two positions are paid positions (Stage Manager - \$900 per production; Assistant Stage Manager - \$450 per production) Contact Ms. Homer by Friday of the first week of classes to set up an interview if you are interested in being considered for one of these positions. 565-4654 or paula.homer@unt.edu .

General Qualifications: Multi-tasker, effective people skills, initiative, able to read scores, good sense of rhythm, leadership, able to communicate directions in writing.

Rehearsal and Stage Etiquette

Creating, Discovering, Revealing

The rehearsal period is an exciting time that needs the creative and focused energy of everyone. Each performer's input is needed to fully realize the potential of the opera. In order to achieve this:

- 1) Singers must be vocally and physically warmed up for every rehearsal.
- 2) If it is a staging rehearsal, music must be memorized.
- 3) All attention must be on the rehearsal no matter whether you are watching or doing the staging. Extraneous talking and visiting destroys the energy of the rehearsal and slows progress.
- 4) Have a personal notebook and pen to take down verbal notes given by the Stage Director and Conductor.
- 5) Come to the next rehearsal (or coaching) with all music and/or staging notes corrected and blocking learned and memorized.

Creating a role is the process of setting a firm foundation based on structure, discipline, research, information given by authorities, as well as playfulness, spontaneity and creativity. Try to come to each rehearsal with new ideas. Be courageous! Try out ideas (the Director's as well as your own). Be prepared to be unprepared! In other words, be so prepared and confident that you feel you could try any idea someone else suggests. Act upon a spontaneous idea and be willing to learn that it may or may not work in the overall picture of the opera. Remember: energy begets energy. A performer who gives nothing gets nothing (or very little) from her/his partners on stage or from the Director.

Rehearsal Notes

Only the Stage Director, Conductor, Stage Managers and Heads of crews will give notes. Please do not give notes or unsolicited opinions to you colleagues! Take care of yourself and create a safe space in which everyone can work.

Practical Matters

- 1) **Clothing in rehearsals:** Wear clothes that allow you to move freely. NO tennis shoes flip-flops, platform soles, clogs, or any type of non-supporting shoe (Ladies: that particularly mean opened toed shoes or sandals). Character shoes

Sponges	highlight
Light facial moisturizer	shadows
Powder puff	blush
Make-up remover	eyeliner
	mascara
	lip color

Singers in the chorus and 'un-named' roles are required to bring comb/brush, sponges, and make-up remover. (Baby wipes work well for this.) All other make-up will be supplied.

Additional items needed for personal corrective make-up should be included in the kit, such as: mellow yellow to cover red blemishes or foundation that will cover tattoos.

UNT Opera will supply specialized items required for the production such as beards, mustaches, changes to the face such as a nose, ears, etc.

Unless otherwise instructed, the following procedure should be adhered to for performance/final dress call:

- a) start with clean face and hair
- b) pin-curl hair for wigs or otherwise tie back hair for make-up application
- c) apply make-up
- d) put on costume
- e) put on wig

5) In the Theatre

- a) There is no eating or drinking, except water, inside the Lyric Theatre.
- b) Once rehearsal begins, no extraneous talking. All communication should be about the rehearsal and the opera.
- c) If you leave the theatre (to go to the bathroom, make a phone call, etc.) let the stage manager know where you are going. Return as quickly as possible.
- d) Turn off cell phones and pagers. Do not accept or return phone calls while you are in rehearsal.
- e) With the exception of the piano and orchestra dress rehearsals, all rehearsals are open unless otherwise designated by the Director or Conductor. If you have friends/family who are visiting please introduce them to Ms. Homer and Dr. Dubberly before the rehearsal begins.

6) Tickets/Discount to the performances

- a) There are NO complimentary tickets available for any performances.
- b) All members of UNT Opera and Orchestra may purchase as many tickets as they like at the discounted price. (Students who are not members of UNT Opera may only purchase one ticket per student ID.)

- c) Final Dress Rehearsal – Starting with the 2005-2006 season, the Final Dress Rehearsal for each opera will be OPEN to all College of Music students. Seats will be on a first come–first served basis. Tickets are \$5.00.
- d) Friends and Family Opera Tour. This tour is a behind-the-scenes look at the Lyric Theatre and each opera. It is free to any cast, crew, or orchestra member’s friends and/or family members. Check Master Schedule for details.

UNT Opera Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations on receiving an opera scholarship award!

Patrons

Unlike most other scholarships in the College of Music, all of the opera scholarships come from specific patrons of UNT Opera who have a special interest in opera and assisting aspiring singers. Therefore, it is important that you establish a relationship with your patron by sending them a thank-you note and by notifying them of all solo performances during the year (not just opera performances, but recitals and concerts as well.) Sometimes you may be invited out by your patron for dinner, concert, or other social event or activity. Please make every effort to clear your schedule in order to accept the invitation. Also, let Ms. Homer know of all invitations. If the invitation conflicts with rehearsals, the opera faculty will make every effort to accommodate the invitations by adjusting the rehearsal schedule.

Role-Modeling

As a scholarship recipient, others look to you as role models for the highest levels of singing, preparation, discipline, punctuality, and creativity. Others may look to you as a leader. How you treat and speak to colleagues, chorus, orchestra, and crew members will set the tone for the working atmosphere of the production. Remember: energy begets energy. Reaching out to others will inspire others to reach out. Modeling focus and concentration will create focus and concentration in the rehearsal. Establishing partnerships with other cast members and practicing non-judgment will create “safe space”.

Outreach performing

As a scholarship recipient, you are viewed as our most outstanding talent. As such, there are times when we will ask you to perform for the public outside of the productions. This may be for clubs, social gatherings, banquets, etc. We will try to notify you of these ‘gigs’ as early as possible. We will provide an accompanist for any such performance.

