Musical Theatre Performance  
THEA 336, Sec. 1  
Spring 2010

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About the Course

Musical Theatre Performance is an exploration of musical theatre in a studio workshop setting. Students will study the work of the actor/singer/dancer and use their gained knowledge to develop as performers. There will be a heavy concentration on vocal methods and music, including vocal production, vocal technique, music reading and sight-singing. Students will prepare and present as soloists as well as members of small groups and larger ensembles. Since this is a workshop course, students will prepare material for class presentation and critique. There will also be a focus on the audition process as well as musical theatre history and repertoire. Finally, the class will participate in a culminating showcase performance at the end of the semester.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. However, it is expected that students enrolled in Musical Theatre Performance are familiar with the musical theatre genre. This class is designed for the theatre student who is interested in developing their singing abilities and strengthening their knowledge of musical theatre as an art. Additionally, this class would be appropriate for music students who are interested in expanding their repertoire to include pieces from musical theatre while incorporating elements of acting into their work. Other students are welcome and will be successful if they have prior singing experience. Finally, this class is a 300-level course and the work load and expectations will reflect this upper-division description.

Course Objectives

- to strengthen vocal ability and music reading skills  
- to enlarge the performer’s musical theatre repertory  
- to reinforce the connection between text/musical analysis and performance  
- to develop techniques for auditioning and performing  
- to provide the performer with techniques to aid in their own learning  
- to assess strengths and weaknesses in performance and propose solutions for improvement  
- to further the performer’s understanding of musical theatre history and tradition  
- to provide a foundation for further study and development

Attendance & Participation

Since we only meet once a week it is crucial that you attend and participate fully in each class. It is expected that students will come prepared for class and workshop sessions. Your attendance at workshops sessions, even if you are not presenting, is especially important since you will be expected to analyze and critique other students in a constructive and positive way.

Participation: Students are expected to be fully engaged during class, participate in discussions, provide feedback and ask questions. You will be asked to contribute to the class blog in a thoughtful and meaningful way. Your participation will affect your grade for this course.
Absences due to rehearsals: I understand that students may be cast in UMW performances throughout the spring semester. You will need to list Thursday evenings as a class conflict on your audition form. However, I know that cast members may need to miss class or class events as their performances approach. This will not affect your grade for this course, but please do let me know ahead of time.

Emergencies: Should you have a medical or family emergency and must miss a class, please contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements.

NOTE: While “rehearsal blacks” aren’t required attire, you should dress appropriately for a class that involves movement and physical work.

Grading

Please see the attached Grading handout for details. Your final grade will be comprised of the following:

- Studio Participation: 15%
- Assignments and Written Work: 30%
- Workshops/Mock Auditions: 35%
- Showcase Performance: 5%
- Final Exam: 10%
- Personal Improvement: 5%

Letter grades will reflect the Department of Theatre & Dance grading scale:

- A: 95-100%
- A-: 93-94%
- B+: 91-92%
- B: 86-90%
- B-: 84-85%
- C+: 82-83%
- C: 76-81%
- C-: 74-75%
- D+: 72-73%
- D: 61-71%
- F: 0-60%

Late work: You will lose 10% of an assignment’s final grade for each day it is late.

NOTE: The Honor System is in effect at all times. All rules regarding UMW student conduct and work ethic apply to this course.

Progress Report

An Unsatisfactory will be reported on your Mid-Semester Progress Report if your absenteeism is high and/or the level of your class participation is unacceptable in quantity or quality.

Final Exam

Your final exam will be comprised of two components: a final solo performance of a complete piece of your choice and a final written response. More information about the final exam will be provided later.

Disability Services Info

The Office of Disability Services has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through the Office of Disability Services and require accommodations for this class, make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Services and need accommodations, I will be happy to refer you. The office will require appropriate documentation of disability. Their phone number is 540-654-1266.
Theatre Performances

You are required to see the Department’s production of Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare in April. Tickets go on sale at the Box Office one week prior to the opening of each production. We will also travel to Washington as a class to see Signature Theatre’s production of Sweeney Todd on Sunday, April 4th, at 7:30pm. Transportation to/from DC will be provided. Tickets are $65 and this class fee is due at the Klein Theatre Box Office by Fri. Jan. 22nd.

Textbook & Readings

There is no required textbook for this class. However, there will be required and suggested reading assignments throughout the semester. It is expected that students will complete these readings. Also, many of the assignments will require you to do your own research outside of class.

It is expected that students will have access to musical scores and scripts whenever possible. We will discuss this further in class. This is the time for you to build up your personal library of music and resources. You will most likely purchase various songbooks and scores throughout the course of this semester.

You are strongly encouraged to purchase a small digital (or tape) recorder for this course. This recorder can be used to record your vocal line at the piano as well as your accompaniment and will be a huge help to you. If you are not able to play your vocal part on the piano, a digital recorder is integral to your success in this class.

Assignments

In addition to presenting in workshop, there will be a handful of important assignments designed to help you broaden your knowledge of musical theatre and strengthen your talents as a performer.

Instructions, parameters and due dates for assignments will be provided throughout the semester. Assignments will include but are not limited to:

- Your Binder (a collection of repertoire and materials to be used for auditions or performance)
- Self Character Analysis
- Text Reflection (one for each song presented in workshop)
- Mock Auditions (done during class)
- Listening Journals
- Individual Show reports
- Written Responses

Workshop

Seven classes will be dedicated to workshop. You will present a minimum of three workshop pieces during the course of the semester. Two must be solos and the third may be a solo or duet/small ensemble number (this is your choice). Whenever possible, you should try to present pieces that include both music and text.

You will receive guidelines on selecting pieces for workshop. Generally, you will be expected to select pieces that suit your individual vocal range and also represent a variety of styles and emotions. You will be expected to choose contrasting work.

While workshop pieces do not have to be “performance ready,” they should show evidence of thoughtful preparation. You should be able to justify the acting, singing and movement choices you are making within the musical context of your piece. Keep in mind: while we will be able to spend some time selecting appropriate pieces for each student to study and prepare, we will not be able to have each student learn each piece during class time. You will learn much of your piece outside of class.
The more you know about the piece you are presenting, the stronger your performance will be. Students should be able to speak about their character and the situation in which they are singing. Many pieces detail the relationships between the singer and other characters in the work; it is essential that you understand these relationships and how they advance the plot of the work.

Workshop is a unique opportunity for you to receive critical feedback about your work and progress. The more seriously you prepare and the more frequently you present, the more you will benefit as a performer. You are encouraged to present additional workshop pieces as time may allow.

Students in the “audience” during each workshop session are expected to provide thoughtful, intelligent feedback and constructive criticism. As a group, we will help each student develop his or her own work. Your participation in this feedback and critique is essential to your success in the course.

**Important:** You are responsible for signing up for a workshop session ahead of time. You may sign up for workshops before or after class and during the week via email. You must submit your music to our accompanist prior to the workshop session (bottom line: the accompanist should not be sight-reading your music during workshop).

**Showcase**

We will present a showcase performance at the end of the semester. We will develop the program for this showcase as a group and feature pieces from workshop sessions throughout the semester as well as any large ensemble numbers we have prepared as a class.

The showcase will take place on Thursday, April 22, 2010 in the evening. I will provide more info regarding the location asap.

**Class Structure/Content**

Class sessions will include warm-up and content presentation. Certain classes will also contain chorus/production number work and of course, workshop. In order to stay on track, you should plan on presenting in workshop approximately every other week. There will be no more time devoted to extra workshop sessions at the end of the semester. You must pace your work accordingly. Again, you are encouraged to present more than the required number of workshop pieces as time allows.

A good amount of class time will be dedicated to singing and vocal methods. Other subjects will include:

- exploring various pieces of music
- choosing and studying a piece of music
- sight-singing and choral work
- musical theatre history and development
- auditioning
- expanding knowledge of musical theatre as an art, and as a business

Our exploration of musical theatre history, development and repertoire will be structured chronologically. We will begin with a look at the origins of musical theatre and move through the 20th century by decade.

We will have the opportunity to work with other faculty or guests artists in the areas of auditioning, acting/movement and dance. While the concentration in this course is on the music and singing, it is understood that musical theatre performers must combine these talents with acting and dancing to be ultimately successful.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 14</td>
<td>Class #1 – Overview, Vocal Basics, Choosing Repertoire, Music Theory Basics,</td>
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<td>History: 1880 - 1920</td>
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<td>Jan. 21</td>
<td>Class #2 – Learning Your Piece: Phase 1, Theory Review, History: the 1920s</td>
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<td><strong>Self Character Analysis due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Song Ideas due</strong></td>
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<td>Jan. 22</td>
<td>Class fee ($65 for Sweeney Todd tickets) due to Klein Theatre Box Office</td>
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<td>Jan. 28</td>
<td>Class #3 – Learning Your Piece: Phase 2 &amp; 3, Preparing for Auditions, History: the 1930s</td>
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<td>Feb. 4</td>
<td>Class #4 – Workshop #1, Group Number Work</td>
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<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td>Class #5 – Workshop #2, History: the 1940s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 18</td>
<td>Class #6 – Movement Work, Group Number Work</td>
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<td><strong>Listening Journal check #1</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 25</td>
<td>Class #7 – <strong>Mock Audition #1</strong>, History: the 1950s and 1960s</td>
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<td><strong>Individual Show Report #1 due</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 27 – Mar. 7</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Class #8 – Workshop Session #3, History: the 1970s, Group Number Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Class #9 – Workshop Session #4, History: the 1980s and 1990s</td>
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<td><strong>Listening Journal check #2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Class #10 – <strong>Mock Audition #2</strong>, Group Number Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Class #11 – Workshop Session #5, Discussion: Sweeney Todd, Group Number Work</td>
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<td><strong>Individual Show Report #2 due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td><strong>Sweeney Todd</strong> at Signature Theatre in DC.  7:30pm curtain.  Meet bus at time tbd.</td>
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<td>April 8</td>
<td>Class #12 – Workshop Session #6, History: the 2000s and Musical Theatre Today,</td>
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<td>Group Number Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Class #13 – Workshop Session #7, Group Number Work</td>
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<td><strong>Listening Journal check #3</strong></td>
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<td>April ___</td>
<td>Showcase Rehearsal: individual and group times TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Class #14 – <strong>Showcase Performance</strong> (evening, location TBA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 29</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM, 7:00-9:30pm</strong></td>
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**UMW Department Show Schedule**

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<tr>
<td>April 1 – 17</td>
<td><strong>Romeo and Juliet</strong></td>
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