



## 2019-2020 Handbook

James Marvel, Director  
Kevin Class, Music Director

## Introduction

Dear New and Returning Students,

Welcome to The University of Tennessee Opera Theatre Handbook. Contained in these pages you will find information intended to assist you and, hopefully, make things easier for you when you have questions or concerns. Please consult this handbook, in addition to the course syllabus, for information about UTOT's policies, procedures and general expectations. Your UTOT directors and voice faculty wish for you to have a rewarding experience during your time with us. Your cooperation and attention to a few guidelines will help us to offer you our best!

## School of Music

The School of Music is housed almost exclusively in the Natalie L. Haslam Music Center on Volunteer Boulevard. Although many activities of UTOT will take place in this building (including rooms 110 ["Orchestra" room], 068 and various faculty studios), most staging rehearsals will take place in the "Opera Room" (Room 50) of the Alumni Memorial Building. This historic building houses the opera rehearsal room as well as a few practice rooms for which Voice majors have priority. Please be sure to read all rehearsal schedules very carefully to be sure in which building your coachings, rehearsals or meetings will be taking place.

## University of Tennessee Opera Theatre

UTOT's Director is Prof. James Marvel. UTOT's Music Director/Conductor is Dr. Kevin Class.

In the area of performance, UT Opera Theatre is one of the most beloved, successful, and visible venues of the University, College of Arts and Sciences, and School of Music. UT Opera Theatre stresses the importance of its visibility as a performance resource not only to the University but to the Knoxville community, Tennessee, and beyond. As such, it is the particular mission of UT Opera Theatre to explore the scope and variety of the vast body of work comprising the repertory and, in so doing, to create and provide stimulating, vital productions: professional in quality, strong in musical and theatrical values, and rich in imagination.

The UT Opera Theatre seeks, in addition, to provide the community with performances and other activities designed to foster interest in opera and related music-theater forms; developing new audiences, stimulating the current opera-going public and introducing school-aged children to its artistic and entertainment rewards. UT Opera Theatre and the Knoxville Opera Studio render a substantial service to the University, community, and region.

## Knoxville Opera Studio

The coordinator for the Knoxville Opera Studio is Prof. Andrew Wentzel

The Knoxville Opera Studio is a collaborative program between the Knoxville Opera and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, School of Music Opera Theatre. This program offers professional operatic experience to singers who will be engaged in advanced study at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The Studio brings developing singers into direct working contact with active artists in the professional operatic world. Knoxville Opera Studio designates receive graduate assistantships which provide full tuition remission throughout the University for two full years as well as a monthly stipend. Through the existence of the Knoxville Opera Studio, graduate students have opportunities to take on secondary and supporting roles in the main stage productions of the Knoxville Opera, perform in other KO events, participate in community and educational outreach events for the company and take roles with the University of Tennessee Opera Theatre.



*Bijou Theatre, Knoxville*

## CASTING

### Auditions

Auditions are an important part of a musician's life. Take advantage of UTOT's auditions as an opportunity to practice your craft in a safe and supportive environment. Please treat the audition process as an exercise in professionalism by:

- Being well prepared
- Having your music organized for the pianist
- Showing up early, being warmed up and having all requested paperwork completed
- Presenting yourself well (and dressing well!)

### Casting Policies

**By auditioning for UTOT, students agree to perform any role in which they are cast.**

Casting is done with concern for various elements of production, including vocal ability and well-being, musical and dramatic abilities.

Cast lists and credits will always appear alphabetically and will, therefore, never indicate artistic preference. For productions that are multicasted, decisions about specific casts will be made approximately three weeks before opening night.

In the unusual case in which a suitable singer cannot be determined from those presently enrolled for UTOT, the priority for casting will be:

- Regular/enrolled students
- Alumni
- Faculty
- Contracted singers, including professionals.

Once you have been cast you will be responsible for purchasing a copy of the score. Please see course description for the correct publisher and edition. Many copies will be available in the bookstore.

### Cover and Understudy Casting

Covering a role implies that the singer is fully prepared musically and dramatically to step into a rehearsal, or possibly a performance 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 and comes prepared to perform, if needed.

### Double Casting

Being double-cast is an opportunity to provide performance experience for as many people as possible. General guidelines include:

- 1.) Establish good working relationships with your double. When they are onstage, you should be writing down blocking for them and for yourself. When you are onstage, you should be able to count on them for taking blocking.
- 2.) Ideas are public property. If someone has an excellent discovery about a character, they do not own that idea. It is entirely valid for the other person to try on the idea as well.
- 3.) You are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances – NOT JUST THE ONES FOR YOUR CAST. You will likely be required to work some aspect of the technical process on the nights when you are not performing. If for some reason you are not called to technical duties, you will be asked to watch the show in the audience.
- 4.) During the rehearsal process, you and your double should amicably share the available rehearsal time. You may even choose to review ideas or staging outside of rehearsals to make certain each of you has the best possible experience and result.

5.) If you have been released from a rehearsal which your double is attending, you will be responsible to connect with your partner before the next rehearsal to learn the material you missed while gone.

## SCHEDULES

### Master Schedule:

This is the general schedule for the semester. It tells you the day and time periods we are rehearsing, working on crews, or performing. You will receive a copy of this schedule with your Syllabus at the beginning of each semester. This schedule is subject to revision at any time as circumstances may dictate.

### 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).

All registered students are required to keep the scheduled class times and dates free so that you are available for all dates on the Master and Weekly Schedule. Any time that you are not scheduled on the weekly schedule is time you have to work on your role. You are encouraged to attend rehearsals, even if you are not called to them. There is much to be learned by watching others.

### Release Request:

If you have accepted a role in an opera production, there is a responsibility attached to that commitment. Releases must never jeopardize nor disrupt the rehearsal process in any way. Any conflicts with the master schedule should have been noted on your audition form. For conflicts that arise after auditions, it is important that you submit your request via email to both the UTOT Director AND Music Director (ie. James Marvel and Kevin Class).

## PREPARATIONS

You are ultimately responsible for being fully prepared both musically and dramatically for every rehearsal. UTOT has personnel in place to guide you through your preparations. You should make a point of getting the most from any interaction you have with these individuals. They are here to assist, but the ultimate responsibility for your preparation is yours.

### Musical Preparations:

Please consult early and often with your voice teacher about the vocal challenges in your role. UTOT maintains an open rehearsal policy, and your teacher is always welcome to attend any coaching session or rehearsal. You are expected to be completely familiar with sections prior to coaching and expected to master the material and make corrections as needed.

### Coachings

Once casting decisions have been made, coachings and musical rehearsals will be planned. These will begin approximately one week after casting has been announced.

Coachings are NOT note and word learning sessions. There is a minimum amount of individual contact time available in preparing these scores, therefore it is the student's responsibility to learn his/her text and music independently and in advance of coachings. Doing so will allow the student to make the most of coaching time by refining musical work and delving deeper into the score at hand.

In order to assist in your preparations, Profs. Marvel and Class may provide specific instructions or suggestions on pre-

paring a role.

### **Coaching Report:**

Progress in coachings will be monitored by the Music Director/Director by reviewing daily coaching reports. These reports are submitted by the coaches detailing material covered, progress made, problems or concerns and overall attendance and attitude. The purpose of these reports is to allow UTOT's Directors, or faculty, to keep abreast of the pacing of musical preparations, and take note of any musical or extra-musical issues that may need attention.

These reports should be viewed as a constructive part of the preparation process. They may, however, become a factor in determining final grades should we note a consistent lack of preparation or attendance.

### **Dramatic Preparation:**

In most cases, it will be mandatory to be off book by the time staging rehearsals begin. We will always set a date for when students are expected to be off book, but your goal should be to have your entire role memorized as quickly as possible. You should also know what it is other characters are saying to your character. And what other characters say about your character. It is recommended that you give considerable thought to your character before rehearsals begin, but also be flexible to try drastically different ideas from the ones you have considered yourself.

Singers must be vocally and physically warmed up for the beginning of every rehearsal. Please limit use of technology (cell phones and computers) to breaks, unless otherwise permitted. Have a personal notebook to write down notes given by the Conductor and Stage Director.

Once you have been given staging, it is essential that you return with staging and blocking notes corrected, learned, and memorized. Be courageous in rehearsal. Don't play it safe and hope the people around you set the standard. Be the person who sets the standard in your rehearsals. Be Fearless in your pursuit of excellence! Be open to new ideas and understand that not every idea is going to work. Be a constant source of positive energy to your colleagues.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **General information:**

At present, UTOT has a webpage accessible through the School of Music website: [www.music.utk.edu/opera](http://www.music.utk.edu/opera)

This page provides an overview of UTOT, its history, mission, tickets, performance details and other information.

Links on this page include a general Production Schedule, the Music Director's Notebook (a place for unofficial communications including study and rehearsal notes, suggestions and resources for further research, etc.) and the online Coaching Report (see Coachings).

At this time, for reasons of security and privacy, weekly rehearsal/coaching schedules will NOT be posted on this page.

**Specific Information (including weekly schedules/calls):** will be issued via email.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his/her information is correct on the production contact sheet. The student is also expected to check email regularly for updates to schedules.

Rehearsal schedules will also be posted on the Voice Area bulletin board (in the NHMC) and outside of the Opera Room (AMB 50).

## CLOTHING

Rehearsal clothes should be comfortable and allow you a considerable range of movement. Flip flops, clogs and such are not suitable footwear for rehearsals. Character shoes are recommended for men and women. Once we are in the theatre....no open toed shoes of any kind will be permitted onstage.

Please wear appropriate undergarments and footwear for rehearsals and costume fittings. Students should be prepared to have rehearsal costume items available that we will attempt to store on site between rehearsals in needed. That includes shoes, skirts, capes, knee pads, etc.

### Costumes:

Do not eat or drink in costume.

Watch the weekly schedules for costume fittings.

NEVER miss a costume fitting.

Please give costume notes – repairs, tears, pocket needs - to the Head of Wardrobe.

## PROPS

Hand props, rehearsal props, and performance props will be located nearest your entrance. However, it is your responsibility to know where your props are. Please don't touch props that do not belong to you. If your props are not pre-set in the proper place, please let the props crew or ASM know.

## MAKE-UP

You should supply your own basic stage make-up kit. Your supplies should include:

Comb/Brush	highlight
Sponges	Eyebrow pencil
Light facial moisturizer	Eye Liner
Powder puff	Blush
Make-up Remover	Mascara
Foundation that matches your skin color	Lip Color

## CREWS AND TECHNICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Students will be asked to take on additional responsibilities backstage to further their knowledge and understanding of the various components that are involved in producing live theatre. Rebecca Parr is our Production Manager, and she will be making many of the assignments to students, which may include Assistant Stage Managing, Marketing, Costumes, Make-Up, Lighting, Props, Deck Run Crew, Supertitles, Orchestra Pit Crew.

## REHEARSALS

### UTOT rehearsal/class times are:

#### **Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 3:40-6:30pm, Tuesday and Thursday: 7-10pm**

These are class times and by accepting a role with UTOT you are committing yourself to being available during these times. While we will try to have a details schedule to you in advance, you must realize that flexibility is required and that schedules are ALWAYS subject to revisions as deemed necessary.

### Rehearsal Schedules:

will be announced by email and posted on the UTOT bulletin board and Voice Area board (see Communications).

### Rehearsal and Theatre Etiquette:

We wish to treat you as young professionals, and trust that you will always behave as such. Following a few simple guidelines will go a long way in earning you the respect and consideration you surely deserve.

Remember that opera is ALWAYS an ensemble. This means that no single individual is EVER more important than another to the success of a production (this includes those off-stage as well as on!). Treat everyone as a person first. This means being patient and considerate.

Stay calm and collected. Accept that, despite our best efforts to stick to a planned schedule, some scenes or sections of music may simply take longer than anticipated to put together (especially to a high artistic standard). While this may mean that you need to wait for some period of time, your time is never being wasted. You can always use some time to review/memorize some text, study your score or even learn by observation.

We should always leave the space in better condition than how we found it. Stage Management should never have to clean up after you. Any food, drink, water containers should be disposed of by you in the proper receptacle. Take pride in and respect the space that we have available.

If you should ever need to leave the rehearsal room or theatre during a time that is not a regularly schedule break, please alert the stage manager so that we know where you are.

Be a role model to others and demand from yourself the highest level of singing, preparation, discipline, punctuality, respect, and creativity. How you treat and speak to colleagues, chorus, orchestra, and crew members will set the tone for the working atmosphere of the production.

## STRIKE

After the shows, all students will be required to assist with strike. There will be no exceptions. Failure to assist with strike will significantly effect your final grade.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

James Marvel, UTOT Director  
NHMC 310  
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Kevin Class, UTOT Music Director  
NHMC 335  
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Andrew Wentzel, KO Studio Coordinator  
NHMC 308  
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Eileen Downey, UTOT Principal coach/pianist  
NHMC 325  
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Miles Jenkins, J. Marvel/UTOT Assistant  
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Logan Campbell, K. Class/UTOT Assistant  
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Rebecca Parr, Production Manager  
Phone: (865) 566-1653  
Email: rparr1964@yahoo.com

### Voice Faculty:

Lorraine DiSimone  
Phone: (865) 974-7534  
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Cecily Nall  
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Andrew Skoog  
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Kimberly Roberts  
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Cast and additional coaching staff listed on individual production contact sheets.

