



- What you should be doing right now

- Auditioning

- Picking a Graduate School

- Realities of the business

You will NEVER again have this much time to focus on singing – ever.

Don't put yourself behind from the start

Be aware of the reality of the opera world.

Be aware there is a world outside of OBU period.

# UNDERGRADUATE

- ◆ Learn how to sing—if you don't, everything else is pointless
  - ◆ Technique
  - ◆ Diction
  - ◆ Performance practice—roles, recitals, studio, church
  - ◆ Languages

# UNDERGRADUATE

- ◆ Look for opportunities outside of the school
  - ◆ Regional companies
    - ◆ Let them know you exist
  - ◆ Summer programs
  - ◆ Workshops
  - ◆ Go see operas and musicals elsewhere

# UNDERGRADUATE

- ◆ Get another degree/minor/skill while you are here
  - ◆ Marketing
  - ◆ Graphic Design
  - ◆ Accounting/bookkeeping
  - ◆ Web Design
  - ◆ Programming
  - ◆ Technical Theater
  - ◆ Grant Writing
  - ◆ Teaching Certificate
  - ◆ Personal Trainer

UNDERGRADUATE

LEARN TO PLAY THE PIANO

FOR REAL!!!!

# YOUNG ARTIST PROGRAMS

You can learn more about this profession in one summer at a good YAP than you can in four years at school. You **MUST** do one of these somewhere along the way.

# Young Artist Programs

- ◆ Why do a YAP?
  - ◆ 24/7 immersion in opera
  - ◆ You will know if this is the career for you by the time you leave
  - ◆ You get as much stage time in 2 months as you do in 2 years at school
  - ◆ Connections with working professionals
  - ◆ Easier to do now than when you have a “real” life



# Young Artist Programs

Pay-to-Sing vs. No-Pay-No-Fee vs. Paid to Sing

Choose wisely.

Pay if it is worth it for the role(s), connections, or overall experience.

# Young Artist Programs

[www.yaptracker.com](http://www.yaptracker.com)

# Young Artist Programs

## Pay to Play

- ◆ Opera in the Ozarks
- ◆ OperaWorks
- ◆ BASOTI
- ◆ Opera NEO
- ◆ Multiple Italian Programs
- ◆ Lyric Opera Studio Weimar

## Paid to Play

- ◆ Seagle Colony
- ◆ Opera North
- ◆ Natchez Festival
- ◆ Glimmerglass
- ◆ Merola
- ◆ Opera Theatre St. Louis
- ◆ Music Academy of the West
- ◆ Central City Opera
- ◆ Santa Fe
- ◆ Wolftrap
- ◆ Des Moines Metro Opera
- ◆ Ashlawn
- ◆ Ohio Light Opera

# Young Artist Programs

Consider music theater summer stock opportunities

SETC

UPTAs

# Graduate School

- ◆ When selecting a graduate school consider:
  - ◆ Teacher
  - ◆ Performance Opportunities
  - ◆ Cost
  - ◆ Location

# Graduate School

## ◆ Teacher

- ◆ You are going to graduate school to become a better singer so having a good teacher is important.
  - ◆ How have their recent students done?
  - ◆ Do you want/need to study with your voice type?
  - ◆ Are you guaranteed to study with the teacher of your choice?
  - ◆ Is your teacher connected?
  
- ◆ Don't forget to think about your coach as well.

# Graduate School

## ◆ Performance Opportunities

- ◆ How many productions does the school do per year?
- ◆ Are you going to be a stand-out and be cast regularly, or are you going to be one of 45 sopranos vying for three roles?
- ◆ Is there a DMA program?
- ◆ Are there student led or external performance opportunities?
- ◆ Do you have to sing in a choir?
- ◆ Do you want opera and music theater training/opportunities?

# Graduate School

- ◆ Cost
  - ◆ How much debt do you want to accrue?
  - ◆ Assistantships
    - ◆ Opera
    - ◆ Teaching Voice
    - ◆ Teaching other music classes



# Graduate School

## ◆ Location

- ◆ How much is the cost of living?
- ◆ How far are you from auditions?
- ◆ Are there other performance opportunities near?
- ◆ How far is it from home?

# Auditioning

- ◆ Resume
- ◆ Headshot
- ◆ Website
- ◆ Know what you are
- ◆ Repertoire
- ◆ General Tips
- ◆ What I'm looking for as a casting directing

# Resume

- ◆ Keep it simple, clear, and clean
- ◆ Triple check for typos
- ◆ Check capitalizations of foreign words
  - ◆ --ex. La traviata, Le nozze di Figaro
- ◆ Keep it to one page. At most front and back of a page
- ◆ Simple, easy to read fonts
- ◆ All black or very few colors

# Resume Content

- ◆ Name, Voice, Email, Website, Phone Number, Address (optional)
- ◆ Role, Opera, Company, Year
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Training Programs (YAPS)
- ◆ Major Awards
- ◆ Conductors, Directors, Teachers, Coaches (Very Important)
- ◆ Special Skills: Languages, Instruments, Combat, Juggling, anything that makes you more employable.
- ◆ Picture is nice in my opinion
- ◆ Always label the file with your name (joshshawresume.docx)

# Headshot

- ◆ Must look like you
- ◆ Doesn't have to cost a fortune
- ◆ Look comfortable and confident
- ◆ Have a color and black and white (digital)
- ◆ Have one with your name and without (digital)
- ◆ For print, it is best to have a vertical color shot with your name
- ◆ Always label the file with your name (joshshaw.jpeg)

# Examples of Headshots and Resumes

# Website

- ◆ You need a website right now
- ◆ Learn to do it yourself for easy updates and changes
  - ◆ Wix.com, Wordpress, etc
- ◆ Should contain: Bio, Resume, Pictures, Audio Clips, Video, Performance Schedule, Downloadable Headshot, bio and resume, measurement sheet, contact form, link to Youtube Channel and FB Page
- ◆ Domain name is important. Choose something easily searchable and identifiable.
- ◆ Design it so it works on all devices and platforms
- ◆ Keep it updated!

# Know who/what you are

- ◆ Audition for roles that you can actually sing (the whole role, not just the aria) and that you look appropriate for
- ◆ Find your niche and pursue those roles
- ◆ Audition for roles appropriate for your age



# Audition Repertoire

- ◆ Find your five arias and practice them relentlessly.
- ◆ Always sing what you sing best, regardless of the situation. When in doubt, sing your easiest piece.
- ◆ If you ever think, “I probably know all the words.” Skip it.
- ◆ Sing from the show whenever possible.
- ◆ Don't audition with a French piece for an Italian season.
- ◆ Short arias are better than long arias in most cases.
- ◆ Obscure arias will rarely get you the job
- ◆ Good to bring a printed list always

# General Audition Tips

- ◆ Always be early
- ◆ Confidence (false or deserved) is always more attractive than nerves
- ◆ Do everything you can to be likeable
- ◆ Singing an easy song well is 1000 times better than singing a hard song poorly
- ◆ Canceling an audition is better than bombing an audition
- ◆ Never no-show

# General Audition Tips

- ◆ Try to find some personal connection to the company or staff.
- ◆ Be willing to take a lesser role
- ◆ Sending a “thank you for hearing me” email never hurts your chances.
- ◆ Mark your music clearly.
- ◆ Bring an accompanist if it makes you feel better about your chances.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to take a risk with an interpretation or character choice.

# General Audition Tips

- ◆ Do something to make them remember you.
  - ◆ Joke, “hello” from so-and-so, wear something a little different
- ◆ Cheat—go to the internet and research who you are auditioning for. Find out who you know in common. What kind of productions does the company typically do? Are they usually straight-laced and traditional? Do they like “crazy”? Has this director done the show you are auditioning for? Can you see a video of that on-line?
- ◆ Cheat some more – Wear out Youtube watching different versions of your arias and take what you like.

# General Audition Tips

- ◆ Get off the couch and go to the gym. Opera is more and more concerned with appearance.
- ◆ Audition Attire
- ◆ Prioritize auditions. You can't get to every audition and there is no reason to try. Be smart about what roles and companies you may actually have a shot at. Don't sing for a company before you are ready. Also, take a look at a company's history. If they've hired the same tenor for the last five shows, they are probably going to hire him again.

# What I'm looking for in an audition

- ◆ First and foremost, I have to believe you can sing the role on any given day, under any circumstances.
- ◆ You have to be able to act.
- ◆ You have to look the part.
- ◆ You have to seem easy to work with, excited about the opportunity, ready to work hard, and have a personality that says, “this person is going to be so much fun to work with”.

# Hodgepodge

- ◆ December in New York
- ◆ Coaches
- ◆ Languages
- ◆ Resources
  - ◆ Classical Singer, YAPTracker, Castel Books, Opera News, Opera America
- ◆ Split focus on opera and music theatre
- ◆ DMA

# Realities of a Career in Opera

- ◆ Student Loan Debt
- ◆ Cost of auditioning
- ◆ Balancing a day job with a career
- ◆ Lifestyle
- ◆ Family life
- ◆ Best case scenario
- ◆ Options for after the career