Guidelines and Criteria to Assess Singing and Music Training in Baccalaureate Music Theater Programs

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GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA TO ASSESS SINGING AND MUSIC TRAINING IN BACCALAUREATE MUSIC THEATER PROGRAMS

By

Rachelle Fleming-DeBerger

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

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GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA TO ASSESS SINGING AND MUSIC TRAINING IN BACCALAUREATE MUSIC THEATER PROGRAMS

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Within the last twenty years there have been a growing number of prospective students interested in pursuing musical theater (MT) training in colleges and universities throughout the United States. To meet this demand, the number of schools offering baccalaureate MT degrees has also grown. However, information on how to assess the music and singing training of undergraduate MT programs is not easily accessible to prospective undergraduate students. This is likely due to the fact that colleges and universities have only begun offering degrees in MT since 1970. Research-based information in this area is primarily found in peer-reviewed journals or by attending workshops presented by a few pedagogues specializing in MT vocal methods and techniques.

The purpose of this essay is to develop criteria for assessing the singing and music training in MT baccalaureate degree programs that would be useful for prospective MT students, based on the current literature.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Within the last twenty years there have been a growing number of prospective students interested in pursuing musical theater (MT) training in colleges and universities throughout the United States. In order to meet this demand, the number of schools offering baccalaureate MT degrees has also grown. The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) list 74 professional baccalaureate MT degree programs combined. However, information on how to assess the music and singing training of undergraduate MT programs is not easily accessible to prospective undergraduate students. This is likely due to the fact that colleges and universities have only begun offering degrees in MT since 1970, and research-based information in this area is primarily found in peer-reviewed journals or by attending workshops presented by a few pedagogues specializing in MT vocal methods and techniques.

While there is a growing demand for MT training and a growing number of collegiate degree programs, a concern among MT researchers is a lack of qualified faculty trained to address the unique performance demands of the MT performer. A leading pedagogue, researcher and author writes:

Repetoire needs for the music theater singer can be as extensive as that singer has styles….There are still far too many college and university voice faculties claiming to teach music theater with no one on staff who understands the various CCM styles and the voice techniques needed to support them. There are far too many teachers who believe Broadway

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vocal styles are still classically-based. There are far too many singers who say they get little or no help with CCM technique and repertoire from their private and independent teachers.2

A recent survey of singing teachers found most respondents who taught MT students, “had little professional experience and little formal training in vocal pedagogy for this style.” In looking specifically at “Training of MT voice teachers” in the study’s findings, the authors state: “Analysis of the data indicates that only 7% of the MT voice teachers have both training to teach MT and professional experience. Additionally, almost one half had neither training specifically oriented to teaching MT nor professional experience.”3 Findings from this survey further substantiate the need of a college guide for prospective MT students to assess the singing and music training of MT degree programs.

There are a few published college guides that focus on schools offering degrees in visual and performing arts. Programs specializing in MT, if discussed, are mentioned as a sub-category within the more academically established areas of classical voice performance or drama. This is also likely due to the fact that undergraduate performance degrees in MT are a relatively recent addition to colleges and universities.4

Research related to MT vocal production, training, and technique by vocal pedagogues and voice scientists frequently cite the increasing demand for appropriate

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MT singing and music training. The growing number of MT and/or contemporary commercial music (CCM) degree programs, are primary reasons for their research. This growing body of current research literature discusses issues in MT degree programs, the training of MT students, and current singing and musical demands of MT performers:

Schools of music and conservatories, which heretofore have had only classical vocal training, are adding commercial music departments and majors. Music theater is growing in acceptance and popularity, and students are increasingly applying to schools that have this type of vocal training. The authors were able to locate 31 schools of music and 40 schools of theater offering Bachelor’s degrees.⁵

In the past few decades, CCM music, which in many cases utilizes belt, has evolved into a highly sophisticated and technically demanding art form which has excited the curiosity of researchers, created a need for its own pedagogy, and, in response to popular demand, has led to the development of music theater and CCM departments throughout academia.⁶

Across the United States the study of music theater is available at over one hundred institutions. The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) have accredited music theater degrees at 43 colleges and universities. The viability of this program of study grew out of the more advanced multidimensional needs of the contemporary musical. Another factor in the development of music theater programs stems from professional productions’ no longer casting from an existing chorus of dancers or singers. Instead producers and directors expect the incoming performer to be well-schooled in singing, dancing, and acting: the triple threat.⁷

Most professional musical theatre training programs require that students study music theory. The content of such training, however, varies widely in both depth and rigor. Now that the number of musical theatre training

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⁷ Philip A. Christiansen, “A Music Theater Program for Indiana University” (DMA diss., Florida State University, 2002), 2.
programs has increased, so too has an awareness of the specific educational and skill needs of their students.\(^8\)

…since 1970, many colleges, universities, and conservatories have begun offering programs in music theater…. At New York University, 75% of the incoming freshman voice majors chose the music theater degree, while 25% declared classical voice as their major for the 2003-2004 school year….\(^9\)

…musical theater training programs have appeared in many colleges and universities. Although acting and dance are generally taught very well in these programs, vocal instruction pertinent to the needs of musical theater performers has often lagged behind. Perhaps the most important cause of this weakness in vocal training is the apparent failure of classical vocal pedagogy to adapt to the vocal requirements of musical theater singers.\(^10\)

The availability of collegiate training for teachers of MT is an even more recent development. A few vocal pedagogy degree programs have emerged that include MT coursework and teaching opportunities in their curriculum, a core program of study in contemporary commercial vocal pedagogy, or a core curriculum in MT vocal pedagogy. In a recent *Journal of Singing* article focusing on graduate vocal pedagogy programs,\(^11\) two important programs are presented which include information on their coursework as well as distinctive features. Esther Jane Hardenbergh, EdD, Chair and Associate Professor of Vocal Performance at the Frost School of Music, University of Miami, discusses teaching requirements for all Vocal Pedagogy and Performance doctoral students. Making this an essential part of this degree program at the University of Miami

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offers the unique advantage of gaining teaching experience of applied voice students in up to four genres including MT, classical, jazz, and contemporary. Dr. Hardenbergh also points out that vocal pedagogy coursework for this degree includes the subject of belting and MT pedagogy in addition to the traditional subject areas covered in vocal pedagogy courses, and the availability of a course in MT literature for teaching. In 2003, Shenandoah Conservatory in collaboration with long-time CCM pedagogue, Jeannette LoVetri, founded “a summer intensive of Contemporary Commercial Music Vocal Pedagogy based upon Somatic Voicework™.”12 The Shenandoah University website also states that this program continues “to be the first and only institution to include courses in contemporary commercial music (CCM) vocal pedagogy for academic credit in a graduate degree program.”13 Penn State University recently announced they “will be offering a ‘first of its kind’ advanced degree specifically for the training of musical theatre teachers of singing” through a Master of Fine Arts degree in Voice Pedagogy for Musical Theatre.14

An important area of singing training for today’s MT student is developing the ability to sing a wide range of popular musical styles now included in a great deal of MT repertoire. In addition to learning to perform in multiple styles, it is considered essential to develop appropriate vocal technique for healthy belting, speech-based singing, and head voice singing techniques with which to perform them. Published books on


auditioning for MT and for the professional singing actor consider the ability to both belt and sing ‘legit’ necessary to be employable in MT\textsuperscript{15}

In 2006, the oldest international voice symposium devoted to voice science, medicine, and education, held its first-ever contemporary commercial music (CCM) panel at The Voice Foundation’s 35\textsuperscript{th} Annual Symposium: Care of the Professional Voice. This panel of prominent voice professionals led by Jeannette LoVetri, also included Dominique Eade, Robert Edwin, Douglas Hicks, Johan Sundberg, and Robert Sataloff. CCM is a recent term used in place of ‘non-classical’ music and covers all forms of popular vocal music. Robert Edwin credits Jeannette LoVetri with originating the term\textsuperscript{16} and Ms. LoVetri defines the term in an article as the following:

CCM was defined as any kind of music that was not classical. The categories included the following styles of music in alphabetical order: Cabaret, Country, Experimental, Folk, Gospel, Jazz, Musical Theater (MT), Rock, and R&B (Rhythm and Blues). The term CCM was used to describe these styles of music generically.\textsuperscript{17}

This first panel focused on MT and jazz singing due to their more frequent presence in the academic world over other CCM genres. This yearly symposium offers voice professionals a chance to share and learn about the most current research in voice medicine and science. The inclusion of MT and jazz singing at this important annual international symposium in 2006, illustrates the acceptance of MT pedagogy and voice


science as an important area of research and its exposure to a more broad-based audience of professionals.

MT is considered a recently developed art form, especially when comparing MT literature with the voluminous body of literature on Western classical singing. There is a body of literature on classical vocal pedagogy spanning 400 years that includes scientific research, medical research, and pedagogical methods. In 1602 the first treatise on classical singing was published in Giulio Caccini’s preface to *Le Nuove Musiche*.18

CCM genres are the most widely listened to styles of music today and provide, by far, the most job opportunities for vocalists. MT productions worldwide incorporate almost every style of CCM music in their scores, in addition to classic ‘legit’ MT scores by the likes of Rodgers and Hammerstein. Due to the relatively recent development of this art form, performance practices have also rapidly evolved, greatly increasing the demands on performers.

**Justification of the Study**

As discussed above, more and more colleges and universities offer baccalaureate degrees in MT in order to meet the demand for those students seeking training in this genre. Current research and literature indicates that in many MT training programs, existing in-service faculty members are required to train both MT students and classical voice performance majors. It is believed a large percentage of faculty are trained predominantly in the teaching and performance of Western classical singing, repertoire and performance practices. Several recent studies site the lack of training to teach MT

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vocal techniques and styles among voice teachers in collegiate and private settings as a primary reason for their research. Authors have also written articles, dissertations, and several texts that address comprehensive MT training guidelines, MT auditioning techniques, MT teaching methods, music theory for MT majors, and essential musicianship skills for MT performers. Until recently, the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) which is the national accrediting agency for schools of music recognized by the Department of Education, published combined standards for undergraduate programs in opera and MT “as if each performance medium did not have its own specific performance requirement.” This included the absence of specific needs for MT singing, music and performance training. NASM has since revised their standards and guidelines to include separate guidelines specific to MT programs based on their review of the essential skills and knowledge required of MT performing artists.

Although current research comparing the physiological differences between classical and MT singing agree these styles share some similar aspects of vocal production, they have also discovered significant differences in the singing of these styles. As a result of these findings, prominent voice scientists and pedagogues are writing about the significant differences between these two styles of singing. Researchers

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in these same fields state the need for different pedagogies geared toward training MT singers.\textsuperscript{21}

Music faculty members are often faced with teaching MT majors without:

- MT pedagogical training;
- MT performing experience;
- an understanding of the aesthetics of MT singing;
- an understanding of MT singing technique, including belting;
- knowledge of appropriate literature;
- an understanding of MT performance practices.

This makes the presence of faculty experienced and trained in teaching MT, an important criteria when assessing MT programs, and one that is not a consideration in existing published college and university guides.

The growing interest in undergraduate MT training, the growth of collegiate MT degree programs, and the lack of available guides for prospective students establish a need for criteria to assess undergraduate MT programs. This research is further justified due to the finding and statement in the current literature that a large percentage of collegiate faculty teaching MT majors, are lacking MT pedagogy training and/or professional performing experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop criteria for assessing the singing and music training in MT baccalaureate degree programs that would be useful for prospective MT students, based on the current literature.

Research Questions

This study will answer the following questions:

1. What essential singing and musicianship skills are currently required of MT performers?
2. What baccalaureate MT degrees are available and what are their differences?
3. Based on the musical and singing skills required of MT performers, what are the primary areas of training for MT students?
4. Based on the literature review, what other areas should students look for in MT degree programs?

Based on answers to the above questions, this essay will establish criteria for assessing the singing and music training in baccalaureate MT programs.

Glossary and Acronyms

Belt voice/belting/chest voice: The term belting originates from the 1940’s and 1950’s to describe the singing of MT performers in the United States such as Ethel Merman. This style of singing has existed world-wide for thousands of years in folk singing. In this type of vocal production the thyroarytenoid muscles (TA) are dominant, while the cricothyroid muscles (CT) remain active for both men and women. This is combined with resonant
qualities that are bright and speech-connected, with a narrowed pharynx and typically horizontal mouth shape.\(^{22}\)

**CCM:** contemporary commercial music

**Chest register:** TA dominant vocal production, often referred to as ‘chest voice’.

**Cricothyroid muscles:** The cricothyroid muscle connects the cricoids and thyroid cartilages, lengthening and thinning the vocal folds as it contracts. The head register is associated with this muscle function.\(^{23}\)

**DOE:** United States Department of Education

**Head register:** CT dominant vocal production, often referred to as ‘head voice’.

**Legit:** Short for legitimate, the term originates from Western European classical singing and refers to the MT vocal production most closely related to classical singing. It is most often associated with vocal production in women that is CT or ‘head voice’ dominant and in men that is TA or ‘chest voice’ dominant, combined with bright and speech-connected resonance qualities.\(^{24}\)

**Mix:** A blending of legit and belt vocal production that is speech-connected with a wide variety of resonant qualities depending on the repertoire. Other labels for this type of


vocal production include: belt-mix, chest-mix, head-mix, and lite-mix. The balance of TA and CT dominance combined with the use of resonance, determines the type of blend and resulting sound.  

NASAD: National Association of Schools of Art and Design

NASD: National Association of Schools of Dance

NASM: National Association of Schools of Music

NAST: National Association of Schools of Theatre

Registers: Consecutive pitch ranges distinguished by homogenous timbre.

Secretary: Secretary of Education

Thyroarytenoid muscles/vocal folds: The thyroarytenoid muscle connects the thyroid and arytenoid cartilages, shortening and thickening the vocal folds as it contracts. The chest register is associated with this muscle function.

Delimitations

For the purposes of this essay the author will evaluate college guides for prospective creative, performing and fine arts majors. Publications to be reviewed include only currently available college guides for prospective performing arts majors. This study will not include those aspects of selecting a college or university such as cost, or SAT score statistics that can easily be found in many well-known publications updated and published annually.


27 Ibid., 442.
Although this essay will review current research to determine essential singing and musical training requirements for MT performers, it does not intend to provide a pedagogical guide for MT singing techniques, a review of specific programs, or a curriculum for the training of MT students. However, the recent nature of available research-based literature and training supports the need for a guide to finding the most appropriate MT singing and musical training in undergraduate programs.

Comprehensive MT training includes core coursework in dance, acting, singing and musicianship. This study will focus specifically on the singing and musical training in MT degree programs due to the scope of this essay.

**Methodology**

The purpose of this essay is to establish criteria to assess the singing and music training in baccalaureate degree programs. The criteria will be aimed at prospective MT students desiring to evaluate MT training in colleges and universities. This type of information does not currently exist in one source, but is contained within scholarly journal research articles, academic dissertations, and vocal pedagogy and voice science texts. These sources of information are not easily accessible to prospective students and are presented in a format not intended for this audience.

There is a relatively recent growing body of literature by voice scientists and pedagogical researchers who have discovered major differences between classical and MT vocal production and pedagogies. Additionally, the literature consistently points out that demands on MT performers today have changed drastically over a relatively short period of time, particularly in the area of vocal production and the ability to sing in a much broader range of musical styles.
A review of the literature will look at current published college guides written for prospective performing arts students, and current and relevant vocal pedagogy and voice science literature found in peer-reviewed journals, textbooks, and dissertations. The review will analyze the literature for: the qualities required of professional MT performers; and research-based recommendations for MT training.

The review of each source of literature will include what the resource is, its stated purpose, the source and reliability of the author(s) and/or data, an overview of its content, and the specific information that is relative to this study.

**Organization of Study**

The introductory chapter of this essay will present information on the relatively recent growth of collegiate MT degree programs throughout the United States. It cites a growing body of research by pedagogues and voice scientists on MT performance and the changing demands for MT performers today. The lack of specific and accessible information for prospective MT students to assess the training at the many emerging baccalaureate training programs available especially verify the need for this study.

Chapters two through five will present an extensive review of relevant literature upon which criteria to assess MT training programs will be based upon. The literature review will also substantiate findings of specific singing and music demands on MT performers, and the need for training to meet the unique demands for this genre. The literature will review pedagogical and physiological research to discover evidence of findings to support existing or developing MT training methodologies for current demands of MT performers.
The findings from the review of the literature will be used to develop criteria for assessing the singing and music training of baccalaureate MT programs.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF COLLEGE GUIDES FOR PERFORMING ARTS

The most recent published literature on MT performance demands and training, authored by voice scientists and pedagogical researchers, reflects findings of: significant physiological and acoustical differences between classical and MT singing and singing training needs; unique repertoire and performance practices; the need for musicianship training applied to MT works and essential opportunities and facilities for training programs. Literature focusing on performance in MT consistently points out that the demands on MT performers today have changed dramatically over a relatively short period of time. The literature also discusses the importance of musicianship abilities, knowledge of repertoire and styles, auditioning techniques, business skills, and the ability to coordinate the major performance areas found in MT for aspiring performers.

This review of the literature begins in this chapter with colleges guides focusing on performing arts programs and schools specifically. Chapter three reviews accreditation and government-related organizations relevant to MT degree programs. Chapter four reviews research from peer-reviewed journals and dissertations, and Chapter five addresses voice science and voice pedagogy texts relevant to this study.

There are currently three published guides designed to offer an in-depth look at schools offering performance programs. A Guide to College Choices for the Performing and Visual Arts\textsuperscript{28} is a first edition. The first twenty pages of this fifty-nine page book, offers varied information having to do with selecting a program and school. In the section

\textsuperscript{28} Kavin Buck and Ed Schoenberg, A Guide to College Choices for the Performing and Visual Arts (South La Brea: Lulu.com, 2008).
titled “Finding the Right Fit,”29 ‘reputation’ is a sub-heading and offers a starting point for looking at this aspect of a program. While this guide touches upon looking at the prior success of a program, it does not address the specific aspects of musical training required of MT performers and how to research a program’s ability to provide that training.

*College Guide for Performing Arts Majors: The Real-World Admission Guide for Dance, Music, and Theater Majors*30 is the 15th edition of this publication. This guide offers suggestions for focusing on individual teachers at a program that are helpful. However, the suggestions are directed at all potential music majors, and not specifically to students pursuing MT. This publication also offers a list of questions to ask during a visit to prospective schools under separate sections for music majors and theater majors. As in the other guides, these questions offer a general starting point for all majors within these areas, but only in the broadest sense. They are not based on those aspects of training necessary to become a well-rounded MT performer. Their usefulness is even less effective when considering the fact that MT programs are not long established in colleges and universities and the field continues to develop with significant changes in performance practices. This guide also requires a potential MT student to extract information from both the music majors and theater majors sections. Instead of combining these elements in one section for MT majors, information is presented in separate sections. This is because many MT programs are based within a music department/school or a theater arts department/school, requiring some of a student’s core curriculum to be satisfied in other departments/colleges within a college or university.

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This guide will serve as a starting point for developing a more specific list of criteria for assessing MT music training within music departments/colleges and theater departments/colleges.

*Creative Colleges: A Guide For Student Actors, Artists, Dancers, Musicians and Writers,* in its second edition, states on its cover that it offers profiles of 200 programs. In addition to including information on auditioning and portfolios among others, this guide explains in its introduction: “Because you are an artist, you need a better-than-average college guide….” In this eight chapter book, chapters three through seven assess college programs for aspiring actors, artists, dancers, musicians, and writers. The chapter on colleges for actors contains a section titled “For Aspiring Musical Theater Majors” and offers several aspects to look for in a program, as well as information from a former collegiate theater and dance department chair, and a current acting student. However, this chapter does not suggest how to go about researching a school and its MT program, or specifically what to look for in MT music training.

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32 Ibid., 9.
Chapter 3

REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT AND ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS

United States Department of Education

The quality and design of postsecondary schools and programs can deviate dramatically and there is no federal agency with the authority to oversee and control postsecondary education in the United States. Because of this, a system of accrediting schools was developed in order to offer some protection to prospective students and their future employers of a quality education at this level. Although the United States Department of Education (DOE) does not accredit schools, the Secretary of Education (Secretary) is required by law to publish a list of nationally recognized agencies the Secretary deems qualified to accredit institutions and programs of higher education. There are published procedures and criteria for accrediting agencies to be recognized by the DOE as authorities in the “quality of education or training provided by institutions of higher education.”33 The two major types of accreditation available are ‘institutional’ and ‘specialized’ or ‘programmatic’. An entire institution can be awarded institutional accreditation and individual programs of study, departments and schools within a university can apply for specialized or programmatic accreditation. Accreditation is granted initially for five years, after which, if reviewed successfully, continuing accreditation is granted reviews every ten years. This is another way in which agencies promote a higher level of quality within the institutions they accredit. In order to supervise the approval of accrediting agencies, to continually update and generate a list of

accredited schools, and process all other accrediting issues, the Accrediting Agency Evaluation Unit was established in the Office of Postsecondary Education which is part of the DOE. Additionally, the Secretary is advised and supported by the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity in the selection and publishing of nationally approved accrediting agencies, and in developing and maintaining the criteria by which those agencies become recognized by the Secretary. The DOE also offers access to postsecondary colleges, universities and programs that have been accredited by national, regional and state agencies approved by the Secretary. The “U.S. Department of Education Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs” can be found online at the website of the Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education. These resources are meant to offer a means of researching the quality and standards of accredited institutions.

**National Accrediting Agencies**

There are accrediting agencies that specialize in specific areas of study, including four approved national agencies whose focus lies in the arts and humanities. The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) assesses the musical and singing training. The National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD) and The National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) are also national accrediting agencies approved by the Secretary that offer one source of information when researching the quality of dance and theater training in MT programs within accredited universities, colleges and programs. In researching the music training of MT degree programs within accredited programs, The NASM handbook is a detailed, research-based and peer reviewed resource. However, it is not developed for the prospective student and/or typical consumer. The handbook
contains substantial amounts of information intended for NASM member institutions/programs and prospective members, and not relevant to the prospective student. Additionally, information related to essential training, program resources, and learning outcomes is found several sections of the handbook, and written by and for academic professionals. Therefore, the handbook would not be considered a resource for prospective MT student, due to the broad scope of detailed information and its development by and for a professional end user.

**NASM and NAST Philosophy for Accreditation in the Arts**

A high level of training is expected among professionals in the performing arts today. Natural talent without the knowledge, technique and skills demanded of performers in MT today will not be looked at as a ‘triple threat.’ Triple threat is defined as “a person who is expert or adept in three fields, skills, etc.” Triple threat is commonly used in the music theater industry to refer to the coveted and employable performer who is highly skilled in singing, acting, and dancing. This triple threat performer is expected to possess a high level of skill in voice, acting, and dancing. It is therefore logical for the teacher of MT to have sufficient training and experience in the triple threat discipline.

Despite the growing demands on performers in MT, there is no license or certification required of performers or teachers. There are a number of ways in which a student can obtain performance training for becoming a MT performer. The accreditation of a MT program would be valuable for the student/consumer, and enable the

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implementation of industry standards within the academic setting for students and faculty. The process for reviewing individual programs through accreditation was established for schools of music in 1924 with NASM, the oldest and designated national accrediting organization for schools of music in the United States DOE.

NAST set standards for the accreditation of theater schools and programs which were implemented in 1965. NASM and NAST standards for accreditation were developed to reflect the needs of the professional discipline.35

The National Association of Schools of Music Handbook 2010-1136 (NASM Handbook), includes outlines for accredited programs of study and their respective learning outcomes, subject area course loads, necessary school facilities and essential performance opportunities. Liberal arts and professional baccalaureate degrees are included and considered by NASM to be the main type of undergraduate degrees. NASM defines the liberal arts degree as one that “focuses on music in the context of a broad program of general studies.”37 Liberal arts degree titles in a school of music include a Bachelor of Arts in Music and Bachelor of Science in Music, neither of which is designed to develop students to achieve a professional level of performance abilities. A liberal arts degree in music is designed to cover a broad range of coursework in music in the range of 30% to 45% of the student’s total curriculum and a range of 55% to 70% of the remaining coursework is meant to encompass studies in the sciences and humanities.


37 Ibid, 75.
Also included are learning outcomes for music studies and general studies. Although a school has the option to include coursework focusing in specific subjects or specialization in a liberal arts degree, the guidelines for training in additional areas are not as defined as those for performance degrees in order to allow more flexibility. Therefore, this type of baccalaureate degree is not recommended for the prospective student seeking a degree designed to provide professional performance training in MT.

Exceptions are made for schools that only offer Bachelor of Arts and/or Bachelor of Science degrees in music if they have designed the degree criteria to be in a specified performance area. In this situation, programs are evaluated under the guidelines for professional baccalaureate degrees in music by NASM. It is important to know whether a degree program at the institution is intended to be a professional degree or a liberal arts degree when looking at prospective baccalaureate MT programs.

NASC defines a professional degree as one that “focuses on intensive work in music supported by a program in general studies.” Overall requirements for all professional baccalaureate degrees are outlined, as are standards for a Bachelor of Music in Musical Theatre and Bachelor of Art in Musical Theatre which emphasizes music. Further standards and guidelines for undergraduate opera and MT programs are included to address the unique requirements of these performance areas separately. These standards and guidelines developed for professional opera and MT degree programs are a valuable source in determining the best criteria for assessing professional undergraduate MT programs. This is due to the combined efforts of NASM and NAST who jointly

designed the standards for three types of professional undergraduate degrees for the aspiring MT professional. The contribution from both agencies along with that of educators, practitioners and continued revisions deemed necessary for training ‘triple threats,’ allows this to serve as an appropriate resource for assessing programs. This handbook provides current baccalaureate program guidelines and objectives for an accredited program, including faculty, coursework, facilities and performing opportunities for each. All of which are based on an initial evaluation of the essential abilities and knowledge required of professional MT performers.

The appendix contains overall learning outcomes, based on knowledge and skills found to be most important for baccalaureate degree programs in performing arts. Much responsibility is placed on the school offering the NASM accredited program. Some of these include performance facilities and performance opportunities are outlined by NASM with clearly stated program objectives and assessments throughout the curriculum. For degree programs including coursework in other departments such as theater or dance, arrangements must be made and clearly defined to allow for the appropriate level of coursework in each area as well as the availability of facilities for those areas of study. Schools “must be able to provide sufficient full productions with orchestra to give degree candidates an opportunity to perform at least one significant role and several minor roles.”39 This necessitates the program maintaining a balance in the ratio of faculty and facilities to enrolled students to ensure their access to all training outlined for this degree in accredited programs.

Any baccalaureate degree program includes a balance of general liberal arts coursework in addition to the specific professional coursework. Accrediting agencies do not stipulate specific liberal arts requirements. Pre-professional studies in opera are separated from professional studies in MT. However, standards exist for three different baccalaureate professional degrees in MT which may be accredited by NASM and/or NAST. Each of the three degree programs in MT include the study of music, theater and dance but differ in that one places more of an emphasis on coursework in music, one in theater and the third was designed to equally balance all three areas. College guides for performing arts schools and programs do not distinguish between these three types of accredited baccalaureate degrees even though the balance of coursework is different for each. College guides are typically remiss with details regarding the coursework, performance opportunities, facilities, or learning outcomes to be expected in an accredited or ideal program.

The NASM handbook presents a research-based and peer reviewed foundation for developing comprehensive criteria to assess professional baccalaureate MT degree programs. Major reasons for this are:

- it is the oldest accrediting agency of schools of music in the United States
- it is recognized by the DOE as the authorized agency for accrediting music schools
- the standards and expected outcomes for MT programs were developed through the combined efforts of professional peers, agencies, consultants and experts
- guidelines for programs are revised and updated as needed and appropriate
• program standards are the most comprehensive of any available source
• standards are based on the comprehensive knowledge of prerequisite skills

and performance abilities required of MT performing artists.

MT programs accredited by NASM and/or NAST will provide prospective students with a wide range of detailed information, including policies for admission, retention and degree completion, program of study, performance opportunities, faculty information, available facilities, professional opportunities, and course descriptions.

Further information can be requested from accredited programs based on the following information members are required to publish per the handbook:40

I. Published Materials and Web Sites

1. Standards
   a. Published materials concerning the institution and the music unit shall be clear, accurate, and readily available.

   b. A catalog or similar document(s) shall be published at least biennially and shall cover:
      (1) purposes;
      (2) size and scope;
      (3) curricula;
      (4) faculty;
      (5) administrators and trustees;
      (6) locale;
      (7) facilities;
      (8) costs and refund policies;
      (9) rules and regulations for conduct;
      (10) all quantitative, qualitative, and time requirements for admission, retention, and completion of programs and degrees and other credentials;
      (11) academic calendar;
      (12) grievance and appeals procedures; and
      (13) accreditation status with NASM and other appropriate accrediting agencies.

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e. Qualitative, quantitative and time requirements; costs; and academic calendars shall have an evident and appropriate relationship to purposes, curriculum, and subject matters taught.

f. Program and degree titles shall be consistent with content.

h. Through means consistent with its purposes and resources (1) the institution or (2) the music program, either separately or in conjunction with the institution, shall routinely provide reliable data and information to the public concerning the achievement of its purposes.

i. The institution and the music unit shall have readily available valid documentation for any statements and/or promises regarding such matters as program excellence, educational results, success in placement, and achievements of graduate or faculty.

j. Published materials must clearly distinguish those programs, courses, services, and personnel available every academic year from those available on a less frequent basis.

2. Guidelines

b. In addition to a standard catalog, music units normally maintain published documents of sufficient clarity and detail to facilitate understanding about all aspects of their work among administrators, faculty, students, parents, and other constituencies.41

Knowing NASM requires the above information to be readily available and published by all programs/schools accredited by them, offers a broad and comprehensive platform for prospective students to first understand the many areas of a program and school they will want to assess. Many areas included above are not mentioned in guidelines, nor would most prospective students or their parents necessarily know to ask or look for such a broad range of information.

Appendix I.B. of the Handbook, “Standards and Guidelines for Opera and Musical Theatre Programs”42 includes baccalaureate programs in pre-professional opera


42 Ibid., 137-143.
and professional MT emphasizing music, in MT emphasizing theater, and in MT balancing the emphasis between dance, music, and theater. All the programs outlined in this section involve studies in music, theater and dance/movement, and were developed jointly by NASM and NAST in cooperation with consultants specializing in program-related areas involved. Understanding the distinctions between the three types of professional baccalaureate MT degree programs outlined in this document would enable prospective students to have clear expectations of what to expect from accredited programs.

The appendix begins first by addressing the learning outcomes deemed necessary for professionals. This is followed by curricular standards for each degree program. The program standards and curriculum guidelines developed by NASM and NAST for the NASM Handbook, can serve as a useful resource in developing criteria for assessing the music training in baccalaureate MT programs. A duplicate of Appendix I.B. is included in Appendix B of this essay. Learning outcomes in the guidelines include performance abilities, musicianship, acting, dance and movement, language skills, knowledge of repertoire, history of genre, business skills for the industry, and auditioning abilities. Based on the learning outcomes in the guidelines, each program/school is to develop statements of the objectives of each degree program to which the curricula and entire program is fulfilled. Requirements for admission and the successful completion of the degree program should be clearly outlined and include appropriate assessments throughout the degree program along with advising that addresses all areas of learning. Schools must not enroll more students in their programs than can be offered all the
necessary support, advising, and performance opportunities. Required resources also include:

1. Specialized faculty appropriate to the scope and level of the program;
2. Complete opera or musical theatre production facilities available and accessible for full productions; and
3. Library resources for the study of roles through scores, recordings, and analytical texts. These should cover all standard works.\(^{43}\)

The first crucial resource above, specialized faculty, will be addressed more fully in the review of dissertations, peer-reviewed journal articles, voice science, pedagogy, and MT texts. The second and third items above are also fundamental and information on their availability within a program can be obtained from a school’s website, their published materials, or by contacting the school.

Accredited programs (as should any program that offers comprehensive MT training) must also coordinate and make available training and facilities in other areas and/or departments in each of the discipline areas required by the curriculum, including music, theater and dance/movement. Throughout the four year program, a variety of opportunities must be made available that will result in a professional level of performance, including performance of an entire role in a full production. Relationships with professional production companies should be fostered and maintained to allow students exposure to ‘real world’ experiences, internships, and affordable opportunities to see professionals performing in their genre.

Standards are given for three different professional baccalaureate degrees in MT. 65% of the coursework for a professional degree will be comprised of combined studies

in music, theater and dance/movement. The degree title Bachelor of Fine Arts, is reserved for professional degrees and in some cases a Bachelor of Music. Programs in which one of the three areas of performing arts are emphasized will be academically administered within that department or school. If all three areas of performing arts are emphasized, a single department or school of one or more of the departments will coordinate the academic administration of students through their program of study. The handbook goes on to give the following standards and guidelines for each type of professional baccalaureate degree in MT accredited by NASM and NAST.

Musical Theatre Degrees with a Music Emphasis

The first MT degree outlined emphasizes coursework in music that equals at least 50% of the total program of study and are accredited specifically by NASM because of their focus in music studies. The remaining coursework should consist of studies that equal 20-25% in theater and dance, 20-25% in general studies with recommendations for courses “in the career-related business aspects of musical theatre,” and 5% in electives. The goal is to develop professional level music theater singer-actors. Also detailed for this degree program are:

**Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (in addition to those stated for all professional music degree programs):**

a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as a singer-actor. Studies in voice shall continue throughout the entire degree program.

b. Achievement of a high level of skill in sight-singing.

c. Thorough development of skills in acting.

d. Basic development of dance and movement skills appropriate to musical theatre.

e. Opportunities for performances in workshop and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings. Performance of a significant role in at least one full production during advanced study is regarded as an essential experience.
f. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions.45

Musical Theatre Degrees with a Theatre Emphasis

The second MT degree outlined is one with a theater focus and 50% of the coursework should includes studies in theater and dance, 20-25% in music, 20-25% in general studies with coursework “in the career-related business aspects of musical theatre,”46 and 5% in electives. The standards given in Appendix I.B. are also included in “Section IX.D. of the Standards for Accreditation in the NAST Handbook.”47 Also detailed for this degree program are:

Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (in addition to those stated for all professional theatre degree programs);

a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as an actor-singer. Studies in acting shall continue throughout the entire degree program.
b. Thorough development of skills in acting and skills in dance as appropriate to musical theatre.
c. Thorough development in basic musical skills including voice performance, musicianship, and music theory. Studies in voice should continue throughout the degree program.
d. Opportunities to develop a high level of skill in sight-singing.
e. Opportunities for performance in workshops and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings. Performance of a significant role in at least one full production during


46 Ibid, 142.

47 Ibid, 142.
advanced study is regarded as an essential experience.

f. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions. \(^{48}\)

**Interdisciplinary Degree in Musical Theatre**

The third and last MT degree outlined is called an interdisciplinary program in which no performance area is emphasized over another. Voice and acting should comprise 25-35% of the coursework, music and theater 20-30%, dance and movement 10-20%, 20-30% of coursework in general studies for which business-related coursework is recommended, and electives 5%. Overall, at least a combined total of 70% of this degree’s coursework should be in music, acting, and dance/movement. Additional details for this degree program are:

**Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (in addition to those stated for all professional theatre degree programs);**

a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as singer-actor or actor-singer. Studies in musical theatre shall continue throughout the entire degree program.

b. Thorough development of skills in acting.

c. Thorough development in basic musical skills including voice performance, musicianship, and music theory.

d. Basic development of dance and movement skills appropriate to musical theatre.

e. Opportunities to develop a high level of skill in sight-singing.

f. Opportunities for performance in workshops and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings. Performance of a significant role in at least one full production during advanced study is regarded as an essential experience.

g. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions. \(^{49}\)

Important considerations emerge from the above NASM guidelines when assessing the musical training in professional undergraduate MT programs. These


\(^{49}\) Ibid., 143.
guidelines and standards have been developed and revised by a broad range of participants, including member organizations, specialists in each subject area, and educators, creating a reliable, research-based and peer reviewed resource. When evaluating programs, it is important to understand whether a degree program is intended to be a professional degree or liberal arts program, and whether a program emphasizes a single subject area, or is balanced between the three major performance disciplines studied in MT curricula. These guidelines and standards for accredited MT programs can be utilized in assessing the music training in any MT program, accredited or not.

The most detailed standards for musical studies in baccalaureate MT programs in the NASM handbook are those given above for MT degrees with a music emphasis. These requirements are in addition to standards required for all professional baccalaureate degrees in music. The given purpose for these additional standards and guidelines, is “to develop the knowledge, skills, concepts, and sensitivities essential to the professional life of the musician.” The categories for essential musical abilities and knowledge in this section include:

- performance
- musicianship skills and analysis
- composition/improvisation,
- history and repertory, and
- synthesis.50

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In the area of performance abilities, technical proficiency in the major area of performance, knowledge of a wide range of repertoire, and sight-reading at a level appropriate for professionals in the major performance area are also listed as they are in the more detailed standards given above. In addition to those abilities, also required are: the development of leadership abilities that include conducting; rehearsal management skills; keyboard skills; technical skills; collaborative abilities; and a knowledge of repertoire through varied ensembles throughout the duration of the degree program.

Musicianship skills required in this section include developing an understanding of the primary and universal elements of music, their structure, how they combine to create musical forms, their context historically and stylistically, the ability to analyze these elements visually, aurally, verbally and in writing, and the capability of taking aural dictation. Compositional and/or improvisational skills are included to help “students gain a basic understanding of how to work freely and cogently with musical materials in various composition-based activities, particularly those most associated with the major field.”51

The last three categories in this section of required abilities involving musical training are history, repertoire, and synthesis. In addition to that of MT, students must acquire a general knowledge of music history through the present. With the development of musicianship and performance skills throughout the degree program, programs are to

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guide students in the ability to synthesize their knowledge and skills in performance, learning new works and genres, and in their continued development as performing artists.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., 88.
Chapter 4

REVIEW OF JOURNAL ARTICLES AND DISSERTATIONS

Although there are a limited number of research-based pedagogical texts specifically related to MT training and performance, there are a greater number of research-based dissertations and peer reviewed articles available on the subject that will serve to inform this study. The NASM handbook offers essential learning outcomes, curricular guidelines, and required program resources for accredited professional baccalaureate MT programs. The remaining literature will offer training guidelines for MT programs, as well as the importance of and criteria for assessing the specialization of faculty and specific coursework in MT training programs.

Comprehensive Training Literature

*Voice Training for the Musical Theater Singer*,\(^{53}\) a 1987 doctoral dissertation by Susan D. Boardman, is the earliest document selected for this category. Aside from the NASM Handbook, this dissertation is the most comprehensive, research-based study found in the literature for this review. Boardman bases the need of her study on the lack of materials and methodologies available for voice teachers of MT singers in many MT degree programs emerging in American colleges and universities. Goals of the study are to discover the vocal needs of MT performers and to develop a comprehensive vocal pedagogy for MT training programs.

Prior to completing this doctoral dissertation, Dr. Boardman had received a BA from Oberlin College, and BA, BM, MS, and MM degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition to her academic experience as a student, in the introduction to her doctoral essay, Dr. Boardman offers the following background and experience which supports the use of this research:

...I have always loved musical theater, I have taught students in musical theater programs in two universities—the University of Miami and the College-Conservatory of Music of the University of Cincinnati—and I have developed and taught a course in vocal pedagogy and vocal workshop, entitled “The Kinetics of Singing,” in which I explore singing, speech, and movement, among other topics.54

This study includes an investigation of the core skills required of performers in MT and based on that information, a system for the vocal training of MT students which will serve to answer some of the questions this study proposes to answer. The third chapter details the vocal abilities required of successful MT performers and delimits the omission of dance and drama demands due to the limitations of the study. Vocal technique must allow the performer to sustain their voice and health through the rigorous performance schedules of MT productions.

Vocal abilities considered essential include a wide dynamic and vocal range, the ability to be heard, for text to be understandable when singing, to sing and speak with supported vocal production and breath management connected to the body. A variety of vocal qualities are required to support a given text, characterization and character objectives. The author points out the significant difference in the treatment of lyrics for MT and opera. In MT singing, the expression and clarity of text is emphasized over the

music, whereas in operatic singing, the vocal sound is prioritized over the words. Additional vocal requirements in MT repertoire include the ability to transition back and forth between speech and singing, as well as dancing, while maintaining a unified sound appropriate for the character and emotional content of the piece.

Dr. Boardman also includes the ability to sight read music, and to have solid rhythmic and keyboard skills, as necessary for MT performers. Reasons given include the ability to learn music more rapidly and accurately. A broad knowledge of MT repertoire and styles are required as well as an understanding of audition techniques, the selection of appropriate audition repertoire, and the skill to perform a successful audition. Also included are essential musical skills as published by NASM, however, when published by Dr. Boardman, MT and classical degree programs did not have separate guidelines as they do in the current *NASM Handbook*.55

Dr. Boardman discusses the importance of musical abilities MT performers should acquire in addition to those included in the NASM handbook. The first of these skills is the ability to coordinate the three major areas of music, dance and acting in performance. It is important to note that MT programs typically compartmentalize the coursework in these performance areas without specific coursework and training in how to combine these three areas as is required in MT. This learning environment requires the student to successfully integrate individual studies in applied voice, speech, acting, and dance/movement, while under the result-focused pressures of a production. An important

consideration when considering the successful coordination of these performance areas are at the core of the genre.

The next area of training addressed that is vital to MT training is the availability of applied voice teachers who will help MT students “explore the Broadway singing modes, and, if possible, to develop a healthy belt technique.” This is an important consideration because “the kind of singing which the vast majority of voice teachers teach is classical voice.” This is unfortunate since it is crucial for MT students to develop a healthy and appropriate vocal technique for as many MT styles as possible.

Gaining supportive knowledge of the MT business is also included as essential. Suggested topics include “audition preparation, amplification, contracts, unions, rehearsal and performance scheduling, and the personal mental, vocal, and physical discipline necessary to meet these requirements….” Although these subject areas are not specific music courses, they are related to the musical training and abilities of MT performers and would likely be offered through the music department. They are therefore considered relevant to assessing the overall music training of a program. Critical coursework and learning that would be offered through a program’s music department, and considered relevant to assessing the music training in MT programs, includes the ongoing monitoring and maintenance of vocal and physical health. In addition to this knowledge being included in coursework or “special seminars” on this subject, faculty should stress

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57 Ibid., 69.

58 Ibid., 70.
the importance of vocal health and incorporate it where relevant in “body awareness sessions, voice lessons, acting classes and dance classes…”\textsuperscript{59}

Of note in Dr. Boardman’s literature review is the small body of literature available in 1987 on vocal training for MT. This included only three articles by “voice teachers on teaching musical theater students how to sing,”\textsuperscript{60} none of which approve of belting, nor offer suggestions on how to teach it. There were several sources that addressed belting consisting of a single book, three articles, and a dissertation. A slightly larger body of literature on MT “styles coaching” was available, and the three sources available on training programs did not separate the training needs for classical voice, opera and MT.

The final chapter of Dr. Boardman’s dissertation states that undergraduate MT programs have emerged and although the acting and dance training is considered appropriate, that appropriate vocal training for MT students has not been available in these programs. The reason given for this is the “failure of classical vocal pedagogy to adapt to the vocal requirements of musical theater singers.”\textsuperscript{61} The training program developed by the author is based on the above findings of essential skills required of MT performers as found in her research. The author states the primary training objective as the “integration of speech, singing, and movement skills”\textsuperscript{62} throughout the length and in all areas of training.

\textsuperscript{59} Susan D. Boardman, “Voice Training for the Musical Theater Singer” (DMA Thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1987), 87-88

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 75.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 87.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 75.
The sub-categories of vocal training given are: musical training; body awareness; breathing; freeing the voice; speaking and singing; singing and movement; the Alexander Technique; and singing, emotion, and imagination.\textsuperscript{63} For musicianship training, “at least three years study of music theory and two years of piano lessons” is recommended, as well as coursework in Dalcroze eurhythmics, a “method for understanding and feeling music and rhythm at a deep physical and mental level.”\textsuperscript{64}

The next category of training is body awareness which should be taught through exercises students learn their first day of school and continue to practice throughout the duration of the program. Training in this area is to include work on kinesthetic awareness, posture and alignment, the ability to sense and release unnecessary tensions, and connection with the breath. For the category of breathing, the author highly recommends the Linklater method of breathing for speech and believes it would strongly benefit students of both MT and classical singing. In describing this method of breathing the author writes:

What distinguishes Linklater’s breathing method from many classical breathing techniques is its emphasis on process rather than result, and its governance of the acts of inhalation and exhalation by imagination, thought, and emotion rather than by voluntary mechanical movements.\textsuperscript{65}

The importance of breath management is also cited for dancers who generally begin instruction many years before beginning an undergraduate degree program. Typically, dancers are taught to hold their abdomens in tightly, resulting in a high, clavicular breath which often causes tension that makes singing more difficult. There


\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 89-90.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 96.
would be overlap in training for this area with the inclusion of eurhythmics which includes the importance of coordinating breathing and movement.

The author’s program of training includes the use of Alexander technique for its focus on process as opposed to end result, resultant kinesthetic awareness, and release of laryngeal tension. Exercises developed by “Alexander teachers help build body awareness; a balanced, supple posture; a strong back and powerful legs; and a flexible pelvis.”

The singing, emotion, and imagination category of Dr. Boardman’s training program is necessary to develop the ability to connect and integrate emotion, movement, speech, and singing internally and to project those elements to an audience. Repressed emotions tend to repress the voice and inversely, uninhibited emotion often results in a natural and expressive voice. This training should be balanced with continued development of the technical training “necessary to strengthen and build the various physical parameters of the voice—breathing system, resonators, and articulators.”

The final category of the training program developed by the author is Broadway Vocal Modes and Styles, which includes the subcategories: Belting; Diction and Language; and Expression and Vocal Versatility. The author’s research of essential abilities for MT performers revealed “training in belting and its variations, in Broadway diction, and in a variety of vocal expressions and effect.”

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67 Ibid., 117.

68 Ibid., 119.
The importance of diction and language training specific to that demanded in MT is due to the fact that unlike opera, the communication and clarity of the text is prioritized over the quality of the vocal sound. Training in this area must include developing the ability to clearly articulate English texts and dialects to appropriately and healthfully express the emotional content of the character without added tension. Training in this area must also include the ability to speak and sing with “good vowel formation” to be able to produce beautiful, legato vocal sound over which they can learn to “superimpose the characteristic Broadway diction.”

Objectives discussed in Training of Expression and Vocal Versatility include “spontaneity of expression” and developing the ability to perform so that the voice is “always the servant of thought and feeling and the dramatic requirements of score and script.” In support of integrating different aspects of vocal abilities demanded in MT, training must include the integration of speech and song in order to coordinate the use of the voice in sung and spoken text while sustaining a vocal sound appropriate to the character, text and emotional content of a piece with a healthy vocal technique.

**Singing Training Literature**

“Follow-Up Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) Survey: Who’s Teaching What in Nonclassical Music” is a research article based on the data collected from a questionnaire completed by voice teachers between 2003 and 2005. The authors cited the

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70 Ibid., 129-130.

increasing number of MT degree programs in colleges and universities and the relative increasing demand for qualified MT vocal faculty as primary reasons for conducting the survey.

Co-author Edrie Means Weekly, specializes in teaching singers in both classical and CCM vocal production. She has published many articles on the voice and singing, and in 2003 co-founded Shenandoah University’s Contemporary Commercial Music Vocal Pedagogy Institute. Co-author Jeannette LoVetri’s extensive research on the voice has led to the development of Somatic Voicework™ – The LoVetri Method, a training system for CCM vocalists. LoVetri’s method has been the only CCM vocal pedagogy coursework available for graduate credit since 2003 at Shenandoah Conservatory’s CCM vocal pedagogy institute.

The questionnaire was organized into four sections related to performance and training with an additional section for demographic data. Three sections addressed all styles of CCM, and one was specifically for teachers of MT singing. The four main sections focused on “(1) performing experience, (2) teaching experience, (3) knowledge of voice science and medicine, and (4) teaching MT, including a section on Terminology.”72 The fourth category of the questionnaire was also the longest, with the most questions.

There were a total of 145 teachers to complete the questionnaire. Approximately half of the respondents were affiliated with colleges and universities, and 66% indicated that they taught MT singing. Based on the criteria used to analyze the data from the questionnaires, only 19% of those participants “who teach MT were assessed as having

training to teach MT singing,” and only 7% of the MT teachers were found to have both MT training and MT performance experience. Sources of MT training included workshops, seminars, and private voice lessons. Analysis of the data revealed the following criteria:

Four significant categories were also gleaned from this same area of the data. They were those teaching CCM with (1) training and experience, (2) experience only (no training), (3) training only (no experience), and (4) neither experience nor training. The data were broken down further to include those with professional experience as opposed to nonprofessional—or amateur—experience only.

Analysis of the data indicates that only 7% of the MT voice teachers have both training to teach MT and professional experience. Additionally, almost one half had neither training specifically oriented to teaching MT nor professional experience. The percentages remain approximately the same...for the 36 MT voice teachers affiliated with colleges and universities. 

Findings from this survey indicate that a large percentage of those teaching MT singing at colleges and universities lack sufficient training in MT vocal pedagogy and/or professional MT performance experience. As the article points out, voice research has established substantial physiological differences between MT and classical vocal production, supporting the need for singing teachers trained to teach MT vocal technique.

*Music Theater Vocal Pedagogy and Styles: An Introductory Teaching Guide for Experienced Classical Singing Teachers* is a 2006 doctoral dissertation by Karen Sue Hall which offers guidelines for the vocal training of MT students based on current

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74 Ibid., 372.

research. Dr. Hall completed this dissertation in partial fulfillment of a Doctor of Education in College Music Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University.

The primary need given for the research and development of a pedagogy guide in this dissertation is the growing number of colleges and universities offering MT programs which necessitates many in-service voice teachers with training and/or performance experience in classical vocal pedagogy to teach MT students. Therefore, Dr. Hall’s primary goal was to develop a research-based MT pedagogy guide for classical voice teachers. The pedagogy guide was first reviewed by two experienced MT voice teachers and after their suggestions were incorporated, three experienced classical voice teachers evaluated the guide and all three said they found the guide useful for teaching music theater singing technique and styles to voice students.

The author cites her personal expertise as a contributing factor to her dissertation. Relevant prior experience includes: certification in all levels of CCM vocal training offered at Shenandoah Conservatory’s CCM Vocal Pedagogy Institute; performing experience in both classical and MT repertoire; and voice faculty positions at the Crane School of Music/SUNY Potsdam, St. Lawrence University, Ithaca College, the Boston Conservatory, Berklee College of Music, and New York University. Dr. Hall presently teaches MT voice at East Carolina University. Dr. Hall has continued her research in this subject area and her article, “Music Theater and Classical Singing: at Odds Personally and Professionally,”76 appeared in the Journal of Singing in 2007.

The resultant vocal pedagogy guide developed for and presented in Appendix A of this dissertation supports the importance of assessing the vocal training in MT degree

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programs. The guide includes an introduction that includes findings from research in applied lesson methods, a brief outline of MT history and MT degrees in the United States. The second section titled “Part I,” includes three chapters. The first chapter details the stylistic and pedagogical differences between classical and MT singing, including casting guidelines for MT productions. Chapters two and three of Part I address MT pedagogy and styles respectively. The next major section, “Part II,” consists of MT listening examples and suggestions for repertoire. Separate glossaries of pedagogical terminology and repertoire-related terms are included as appendices, followed by a bibliography.

The primary goal of Dr. Hall’s dissertation is to develop a vocal pedagogy guide for MT singing teachers with backgrounds in classical pedagogy. Her detailed discussion of the need for a pedagogy guide is supportive of the importance of assessing the singing training in MT degree programs. Just as Dr. Boardman found a lack of voice teachers with MT pedagogy training and/or professional MT performing experience teaching in undergraduate degree programs in 1987, Dr. Hall found the same to be true in her 2006 dissertation and states that “most teachers are classically-oriented and have little training in nonclassical singing pedagogy and styles.”

In the assessment area of coaching, inclusive of repertoire, styles and audition techniques, Dr. Hall offers resources for selecting appropriate repertoire for students. This also supports the need to assess this area of a program, particularly in the training and performance of those faculty members involved in working with or selecting MT

repertoire for students. Traditional performance or pedagogy degree programs do not usually address MT or CCM repertoire, styles, audition techniques, or casting standards as part of their core curriculum. An understanding of the many vocal styles and production found in MT today is essential for a student’s success.

Although this dissertation is a pedagogical guide and does not address all areas of a MT degree program, the author does mention the expectation in training for students to “develop solid musicianship skills.” 78

“Music Theater Voice: Production, Physiology and Pedagogy” 79 appeared as an article in a 2011 Journal of Singing issue, and is also as a chapter from the recent book Perspectives on Teaching Singing. The article looks at current research and information on music theater singing pedagogy and research published in Journal of Singing. The content for the article is based on responses to a survey completed by “experienced music theater pedagogues from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Asia about current industry definitions and methods of training.” 80 The article also includes vocal health issues for MT singers, and current knowledge on the physiological and acoustic elements specific to MT singing found in current voice science literature.

The authors’ collective experience in MT research and pedagogy combined with their summation of current literature and the information collected from experienced


80 Ibid., 438.
vocal MT pedagogues, support this article/chapter as an important addition to the published literature on MT singing.

Following the introduction of this article there are seven subtitled sections covering: the need for MT vocal pedagogy; a summary of interviews of 12 experienced MT voice teachers on different aspects of MT vocal production; health concerns for MT performers; findings of voice science on MT vocal production; information on the controversial subject of registration with the inclusion of belting; training suggestions for the MT voice student; and a closing summary.

In the section “Do We Need A Pedagogy for Music Theater Voice?,” the authors point out the growing demand of students seeking MT singing training, and the lack of MT vocal pedagogy training and/or MT performing experience for a large percentage of those currently teaching MT voice students per current research. In a separate section, the specific physical and acoustic elements found to be present in the belt sound found in voice science studies are given. Research findings demonstrate substantial and specific differences between classical and MT vocal production.

Based on a their summary of current physiologic and acoustic research on MT vocal production, pedagogy literature, and the survey responses of 12 expert MT voice teachers, recommendations for MT vocal training are given. Important suggestions for training include:

1) Women need to practice in both chest register (for belt) and head register (for legit), as well as with a seamless register transition (for mix)…. 
2) Men may move between classical and contemporary styles in their training and repertoire more easily than women….However, they need to be more flexible in their higher pitch range when making a choice to sing in either belt voice or classical voice. Men need careful guidance in the development of their higher pitch range for
contemporary singing in order to prevent excessive vocal tension that may be associated with the production of the loud, bright qualities of belt.

3) Teachers should encourage students to develop bright and forward resonance qualities for belt and mix, as well as a more balanced timbre for legit….Exercises that promote twang and forward vowels can assist students to develop this quality in their sound……

5) Classical vocal training is not likely to be useful for students learning to produce the belt sound. Female music theater singers need to be able to sing in M1 [modal or chest register] at relatively high frequencies in an efficient and aesthetically pleasing manner, whereas female classical singers are actively discouraged from singing in their chest register as much as possible. Male contemporary singers need to be able to sing M1 at relatively high pitches in belt production with ease while maintaining a loud volume, while male classical singers are generally encouraged to transition into M2 [female head register or male falsetto register], lower in their pitch range.81

The article also includes areas of traditional classical pedagogy that can help in developing MT vocal technique. These include the smooth transition between registers, and the ability of female students to bring their M1 or head register into their speaking range to enable them to sing with legit MT repertoire.

The article “Popular Song and Music Theater: ‘Belt Yourself’”82 offers information on belting pedagogy for voice teachers due to the growing demand among students seeking to develop technique for belting, and the prevalence of in-service teachers with classical vocal pedagogy training.

Robert Edwin is the author of this and the following two articles in this literature review. All three articles are from the Journal of Singing’s (JOS) column “Popular Song and Music Theater” for which Mr. Edwin is also the editor. The Journal of Singing is a


82 Robert Edwin, “Popular Song and MT: ’Belt Yourself’,” *Journal of Singing - the Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing* 60, no. 3 (February 2004).
well-respected, peer reviewed journal, and the official journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS). Robert Edwin is a respected teacher and author of CCM vocal pedagogy. He wrote the first regular CCM vocal pedagogy column in the (JOS) from 1985 to 2002, and since 2002 has been an Associate Editor for the (JOS).

For someone looking to learn more about belting, the author suggests studying privately with a teacher experienced in belt technique if at all possible as a first choice. Given the lack of teachers specializing in this type of vocal technique, Mr. Edwin advises listening to successful and established singers who belt. He further describes belting from the perspective of three basic elements: “Whether under the guidance of a teacher or in the privacy of one’s own studio, the study of the belt voice can be divided into three general categories: its sound, its feel, and its look.”83 The different aspects of belting are described with comparisons to classical vocal production, inclusive of physiology, resonance and articulation, along with guidelines for beginning to practice.

Addressing vocal training methods, the author states:

…a new and different pedagogy needs to be in place to efficiently and effectively tutor nonclassical vocalists. Teachers not intimately familiar with contemporary styles of singing will be, at best, mediocre pedagogues, and at worse, potentially damaging influences in the vocal lives of their nonclassical students.84

“Popular Song and Music Theater: Belt is Legit”85 is an article by the same author as above, and published in the same Journal of Singing column in 2007. In this article Robert Edwin summarizes several ways in which belt singing has become a more

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84 Ibid, 285.

legitimate and researched topic of study and discussion among voice scientists and pedagogues, and recognizes those pioneers responsible for major events in the academic legitimacy of belt singing.

Mr. Edwin defines and discusses the background of the terms belt and legit in their musical theater context. Four specific events thought to be major milestones in the formal discussion and study of belting in the academic and research community are highlighted. This is followed by a summary of the current research on the physiology, resonance, and pedagogy of belting, offering many comparisons to classical vocal production and pointing out major differences in both styles of singing.

Due to the substantial differences in classical and belt singing found in current voice physiology and acoustic research, the author writes that a “vocal technique measurably different than that used in classical singing is needed.”86 Additionally, that belting techniques should be different for male and female vocalists, and that vocal studies should include a wide range of vocal production which utilizes and develops the entire instrument.

This article reiterates that current research on belting, allows for and demands its own pedagogy, and warns that voice teachers “trying to teach ‘healthy belting’…may not be preparing their students for the real world of CCM singing.”87

“Popular Song and Music Theater: What’s Going on on Broadway?”88 was published in a 2009 issue of JOS and in the same column and by the same author as the


87 Ibid., 214.

two proceeding articles. This article talks about the ever expanding range of musical styles found in Broadway productions, and the need for voice teachers to have knowledge of these styles and the ability to provide technical support to music theater students so they can be competitive in as many styles as possible.

In addition to musical revivals, the author points out the growing number of Broadway musicals with scores by CCM composers and recommends youtube.com as a source for listening and seeing examples of all the styles currently in production. Mr. Edwin categorizes musical theater singing in to three groups and offers a brief background and description of these vocal styles. They are legit, belt and mix, with several sub-categories and alternate labels for mix vocal production. Additionally, he points out several specific articles and additional sources for further information on each vocal style of singing. Repertoire is mentioned briefly, specifically the need for music theater singers to have as extensive a list as they have the skill to perform. Finally, the article discusses the lack of vocal pedagogy courses and programs that fully address CCM vocal techniques.

Although this article was written recently, in discussing the lack of CCM training for voice teachers, the author shares his opinion that there is still a shortage of singing teachers to meet the demand for CCM students. He further states: “There are far too many college and university voice faculties claiming to teach music theater with no one on staff who understands the various CCM styles and the voice techniques needed to support them. There are far too many teachers who believe Broadway vocal styles are
still classically-based. There are far too many singers who say they get little or no help with CCM technique and repertoire from their private and independent teachers.”

“Voice Pedagogy: A Classical Pedagogue Explores Belting” is an article that appeared in the peer reviewed JOS in 2007. The author, admittedly coming from a firm background in Western European classical performance practices sets out to answer the most common questions about belting that have been asked in classes and workshops he has taught for the past ten years.

This was Scott McCoy’s first article as Associate Editor of the “Voice Pedagogy” column in the JOS. Dr. McCoy is author of the vocal science and pedagogy textbook, Your Voice: An Inside View, which has been adopted by over a hundred colleges and universities, is former Director of Graduate Studies and the Presser Music Center Voice Laboratory at Westminster Choir College of Rider University and a “founding member of the New York Singing Teachers Association’s (NYSTA) Professional Development Program,” and currently Professor of Voice and Pedagogy at the Ohio State University and co-director of the Helen Swank Voice Teaching and Research Lab.

The author begins by explaining his professional and formal training background in classical pedagogy and his personal history with CCM music and students and the path that led him to gain more knowledge about belting. Included questions about belting that have persisted from students over the years include:

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91 Ibid., 549.
* Can belting really be taught?
* Does belting damage the voice?
* Is belting the same as chest voice?
* Does belting require the larynx to be held in an elevated position?
* Is classical vocal training the best way to learn to belt?  

Dr. McCoy explains how he set out to learn more about belting through listening to collegiate music theater majors, and observing students of voice teacher Robert Edwin, “one of the most successful teachers of belting in the world….” He set out to answer three specific questions. A methodology for his research is given, followed by his findings on each of his three questions, and his personal perceptions and conclusions.

Dr. McCoy observed and analyzed each participant performing the same pre-defined vocal scales or intervals, to determine closed quotient measurements, vertical laryngeal movement, and acoustic measurements. These assessments were completed on 12 of Robert Edwin’s voice students, all in healthy voice and able to consistently belt within the range required by the selected sung scales and intervals. McCoy describes belting as a combination of specific registration and resonance and different from the registration and resonance used in head voice or falsetto. McCoy found a wide range of closed quotient (CQ) measures between participants but as commonly thought in belting, 75% of the CQ measures were above 50%. He includes the standard CQ range for head voice and falsetto vocal production is bellowing 40%. The range between 40 and 50% can indicate either a light or heavy mechanism.

The position of participants’ larynx’ were found to be neutral or slightly higher. In McCoy’s textbook, *Your Voice: An Inside View*, he writes that for classical singing, “the

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93 Ibid., 545.
ideal laryngeal singing posture is one that allows the larynx to remain at or very slightly below its atural resting place.94 Acoustic measurements of participants while belting, were substantially different than typical measurements for classical singing. Measurements of belting revealed higher strong acoustic energy, contributing to the brighter qualities heard in belting.

In closing, Dr. McCoy shares: “Almost all of my preconceptions of belting were false….I still don’t know how to teach someone to belt, but at least I can better appreciate the final product.”95

Coaching Literature

*Acting in Musical Theatre: A Comprehensive Course,*96 is an in-depth MT text published in 2008 that goes far beyond what to teach, but also includes how to teach, with numerous exercises for each area of learning. The book was written as a text and method for training aspiring MT performers, spanning a beginning level into the ongoing learning needs of a professional. The introduction includes the following to substantiate the need for such a text:

The musical actor must also be able to handle a wide range of performance conventions, training requirements and styles that are unique to the musical theatre.

Training for this exciting and challenging field has traditionally been piecemeal, leading students to study singing, dance and acting independently with the hope they will somehow figure out how to put

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them all together when the time comes. Even those training programs that
do attempt to pull the various strands together rarely do so with a
 technique students can reliably access on their own.

Until now there has been no guiding text or established methodology for
integrating all the elements of musical theatre acting….without a clear
technique for approaching her craft, the actor becomes dependent on
someone else to hand her strong direction and will never be a full partner
in the creative process. In short, without a clear system for approaching
musical theatre acting, the student is at a great disadvantage.97

Both authors are experienced musical theater pedagogues and professionals with
current faculty positions at Wright State University and the University of Cincinnati
College-Conservatory of Music. Joe Deer was the founding President of the Musical
Theatre Educators’ Alliance International (MTEA), and Rocco Dal Vera co-authored the
book *Voice: Onstage and Off*. The combined experience of both authors’ work in the MT
industry includes: directing, choreography, performing, and coaching at the collegiate,
regional, national tour, and Broadway levels.

The 448 page text is organized into six sections and a total of 19 chapters. The
broader sections include fundamental acting concepts and exercises, the analysis of both
music and lyrics, applying acting concepts to individual songs, transferring the rehearsal
process into a performance, MT styles, and the final section addresses developing a
professional life.

The sections in this text on breaking down the music and lyric of songs, on
auditioning, and on the business of pursuing a career in MT, are presented as important
aspects of a comprehensive training program. Skills and knowledge in these areas would

97 Joe Deer and Dal Vera, *Acting in Musical Theatre: A Comprehensive Course* (London and New
York: Routledge, 2008), XXVII-XXVIII.
ideally be offered through individual coachings, within the context of applied voice lessons, and in MT performance workshop classes in an MT training program.

*Get the Callback: The Art of Auditioning for Musical Theatre*\(^9^8\) was published in 2009 and as the title suggests, is a book on auditioning specifically for MT. There is a very small body of literature that focuses specifically on MT auditioning and this is by far the most current. The author, Jonathan Flom, wrote the book with both the professional and aspiring musical theater performer in mind. Mr. Flom holds a BFA degree in MT and an MFA in directing for MT from Penn State. He developed and ran a theatre program at Lyndon State College, is an assistant professor of theatre at Shenandoah Conservatory, and has directed nationally, including New York City. He developed this book in response to teaching an auditions course and in looking for an appropriate text; he was unable to find a source that was current and specifically on auditioning for MT.

The book includes seven chapters, a glossary, and two appendices with song and monologue repertoire lists by different categories. The chapters cover pre-audition preparation, how to develop and organize a body of repertoire for auditioning, a detailed walk-through of auditions and possible scenarios/issues that might arise, callbacks, college auditions, the many aspects of a potential job to consider when a job offer is received, and the final chapter discusses in detail and includes examples of head shots, resume, and cover letters.

In the introduction, the author states that many music theater programs do not place enough or any emphasis at all on the skill of auditioning, yet the ability to audition well is the primary method of obtaining employment as a performer. He also feels this

lack of training in this area is partially to blame for the high level of anxiety many performers experience surrounding an audition. In regard to training in general, Mr. Flom feels it “is of the utmost importance for survival in the theatre.” 99 In the chapter titled “Auditioning for Colleges” the author advises prospective students focus on their specific needs in a school and training, to visit schools of interest, sit in on classes, performances, and poll students on their opinions of the program.

*Successful Singing Auditions*100 is a MT auditioning textbook and incorporates the author’s combined years of experience working on productions and in teaching. As stated in the opening chapter, the author’s introduction reminds the reader the difficulty of auditioning, yet it is the vehicle through which every performer gets cast in a production early in their careers and often throughout. The book is an extensive guide for understanding and better preparing for the challenging and specific task of auditioning for MT.

Co-author Gillyanne Kayes is an established elite voice teacher of West End performers, and author of *Singing and the Actor*101 Co-author Jeremy Fisher is an experienced vocal coach, musical director and pianist who has conducted over eight thousand auditions in the West End. Their combined experience working in the MT industry provides a thorough knowledge and level of expertise in the subject area.

The entire book is relative to MT training at any level and covers not just the audition itself, but the many steps leading up to being successful in this area ranging from


specific types of auditions, who you can expect to be present at each type of call, to an in-depth discussion through several chapters on how to define your voice type, timbre, physical type, personal style and strengths, and how to incorporate those elements for selecting the best repertoire for each actor’s audition book of music. In further guiding the actor toward this discovery, the book includes a questionnaire and instructions for analyzing the information in order to determine their Falling-Off-A-Log area (FOAL).

On this subject the authors write:

As an experienced audition pianist, Jeremy has often had to play the same piece for many different people. The unsuccessful performances are not always due to poor preparation. The performer may have chosen a song or a character that is outside what we call their Falling-Off-A-Log area. Your FOAL area is something that you do so instinctively that you may not even realize you are good at it, or discount your ability completely, because you don’t have to ‘try’. Sometimes you can only recognize your own FOAL area when you see someone else doing the same repertoire. Perhaps they don’t understand how to make it work, yet to you it seems obvious. When a song is in your FOAL area, you will already have an understanding on a deep level of what the situation means to the character, so you have a head-start in your preparation. You are then working from a position of authority. Witnessing someone working from their own FOAL area is unmistakable: there is an extra depth of understanding that is authentic and truthful.” 102

In looking at repertoire, the authors first define major categories of musicals, move on to several types of songs within each of the basic ballad and uptempo categories, followed by a wide range of stylistic considerations. Only then do they present guidelines for developing an audition portfolio of music. Beyond the above core aspects of successful auditioning and preparation, additional information offers approaches for learning music, how to learn a song in fifteen (15) minutes. An enumeration of and suggestions for the many decisions that can be made in selecting and preparing a song for

a specific audition, and how to make musical cuts and notate them for an accompanist is included. A chapters provides a summary of the entire process with added information on stage fright and possible causes. Finally, Chapter 14 focuses on the actual audition, audition types, with detailed information on what to expect, how to dress, what to bring, etc. This entire book offers an excellent resource for this essential area of MT training in any professional program.

As its title implies, *Auditioning for the Musical Theatre*\(^{103}\) is a book that focuses on training and preparation for auditioning for MT. The intended audience for the book is any level of performer auditioning for MT productions ranging from amateur to professional.

Fred Silver’s extensive experience in the MT industry includes writing a column on auditioning for MT in *Back Stage* for six years, teaching classes on MT auditioning in New York City for twenty-five (25) years, coaching thousands of actors, and a graduate degree from Juilliard. Mr. Silver was awarded the “first Rodgers and Hammerstein Scholarship for a composer of musical theatre,” and fifteen ASCAP awards for composing seven musicals, along with a ‘Best Score’ nomination by the New York Drama Desk Circle.

The book consists of thirteen chapters covering many of the same elements as the prior book reviewed on auditioning. The author begins by talking about his surprise at the large number of trained actors who consistently appear at musical auditions unprepared. Even with four-year degrees in theater and continued coursework in New York, Mr. Silver finds actors often “expect that musical audition and performance skills will

somehow leap out of thin air and fasten onto them automatically.” Other areas focused on include the ability to ‘act’ through a song, information on the selection of repertoire and use of appropriate style, how to perform in an audition situation, additional skills needed to perform comedy pieces, suggestions for addressing nervousness, the art of sixteen bars for auditioning, interacting with the audition pianist, the difference between voice teachers and coaches, audition attire, dance calls, surviving the entire process, and finally, a helpful list of audition repertoire is provided.

The skills and knowledge recommended in this book are also included in NASM’s guidelines for MT performance degree programs as either program essentials or learning outcomes, and would be part of any comprehensive MT training program.

Musicianship Literature

“Popular Song and Music Theater: Triple Threat Training Program’s Weakest Area – Reading Music: Reinforcing Sight Reading in the Voice Studio for Singer/Actors” appeared in a 2004 issue of the peer reviewed Journal of Singing. The article presents findings from a survey conducted to discover levels of singing training and musicianship among recent MT graduates. The author, Dr. David Alt, was Program Director for Musical Theatre at the University of Miami, Frost School of Music for 21 years where he was on the voice faculty and Chairman of the Department of Vocal Performance. He obtained a DMA degree from the University of Iowa and has extensive performance


credits that include MT, classical vocal repertoire, and theater. Dr. Alt surveyed “Broadway, summer stock, and cruise ship musical directors, conductors, composers, and casting directors”106 in four areas of singing training, five areas of musicianship, and the advantages of being well skilled in all areas.

Participants found the level of musicianship among recent MT graduates to be lacking in areas that would better support their level of work and ability to grow professionally as performing artists. Areas of musicianship included solo sight singing, sight singing and the ability to sustain a vocal line in a quartet, rhythmic reading ability, and musical analysis and problem solving skills. Specifically, recent graduates of MT training programs were found to have minor skills in only three of the five areas of musicianship included in this survey. These were solo sight singing, rhythmic reading and comprehension, and music analysis and problem solving skills.

The author points out that many MT “training programs require only introductory courses in music theory and sight singing, and, very often, no choral singing, which holds obvious value for developing sight reading skills.”107 Those surveyed felt the MT performer with better musicianship skills will have a distinct advantage over those who do not. Dr. Alt concludes from his survey findings, the inclusion of a more advanced level of musicianship training, particularly in sight singing, would provide MT students the skills required by professionals in their field.


107 Ibid., 391.
Music Theory for Musical Theatre is a textbook that applies traditional music theory and analysis to MT repertoire. The authors developed the text to offer a more direct and thorough approach to music literacy as it applies to the specific role of music in MT and the lack of a similar resource. Both authors work in the MT industry and with MT students as collegiate professors. Author John Bell is currently Chairman of Performing and Fine Arts at DeSales University. Prior to DeSales, Bell was Director of the Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre program at the University of Central Florida, Director of Musical Theatre and Opera at James Madison University, and led the dance program at the University of Michigan-Flint. Bell has extensive professional credits as a performer, director, choreographer, and conductor in MT, opera and theater, and is a published Stephen Sondheim scholar.

Author Dr. Stephen R. Chicurel is a Professor in the Musical Theatre Department at University of Central Florida, and Certified Course Instructor of Estill Voice Training Systems. He leads Estill certification courses for vocal professionals worldwide and brought the Estill Model of training to the MT curriculum at the University of Central Florida. Dr. Chicurel is a lecturer, researcher and publisher and co-author of Geography of the Voice: Anatomy of an Adam’s Apple. He has accompanied award-winning Klea Blackhurst and Tony Award winner Alice Ripley in performances, and acted as musical director, conductor, pianist and vocal arranger in numerous MT productions.


The text is organized into three major sections comprising fundamental elements of music theory, a section which analyzes musical examples from MT repertoire, and the final section is a workbook to help students apply the analysis methods used in the prior section.

This text is unique to most MT training programs because it applies music theory analysis to the unique elements of MT repertoire. Standard collegiate music theory courses analyze Western classical music, and more often than not, instrumental music. Additionally, many MT acting training programs look at MT songs by focusing primarily on the music, placing “little or no emphasis on the composer’s art.”110 The authors have found music literacy to be an absolute essential for the MT professional. Additionally, the text is designed to develop the ability to discover and interpret the musical elements of a MT score which contribute to character development, environment, and overall storyline. These learning outcomes will support the aspiring MT performer in “creating, ‘page-to-stage,’ the world that not only the playwright but also the composer and lyricist have imagined.”111

The article “The Triple Threat Actor and the Acquisition of Music Skills”112 appeared in a 2010 issue of the Journal of Singing. In it the author addresses the question of whether actors, specifically actors in MT, require different musical skills and knowledge than a musician. The purpose of focusing on the musical training of MT students is due to the relatively recent availability of MT degree programs in a growing

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111 Ibid., xiii.

number of colleges and universities. Young MT performers pursuing professional careers today are expected to have acquired education in all areas of performance, including musical training.

Author Derek Bond, has been a professional music director and pianist in Australia for over thirty years with a great deal of experience in MT productions. He has been a lecturer in MT at Edith Cowan University’s Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) since 1990.

The article begins by describing the music skills expected of professional MT performers today who have the advantage of specialized MT training programs. The author explains how his work as a musical director in MT and as a MT lecturer at WAAPA led him to develop a program in musicianship skills designed specifically for the Bachelor of Arts in MT degree program at WAAPA. The author developed this three year long curriculum in music theory to incorporate the overall training of the MT performer, and the musical skills deemed essential for today’s triple threat. An outline of what is covered in the program’s three years of musicianship training is given, along with expected learning outcomes.

Mr. Bond compares the ideal triple threat described in David Alt’s article reviewed above, to be equivalent to what is considered a triple threat in Australian MT. He also points out the daunting task of creating training programs that successfully address and integrate the performance areas that will provide students with the best possible training in the three major areas of singing/music, dance, and acting. With such a wide range of skills to develop in a four-year degree program, Bond stresses the
importance of providing musical training based on and taught by professors familiar with the MT genre and the musical demands on MT performers.
Chapter 5

REVIEW OF VOICE SCIENCE AND PEDAGOGY TEXTS

This category of the literature review is included to support the established understanding by published voice science and pedagogy professionals, that the controversial form of vocal production known as ‘belting,’ can be produced healthfully and with longevity by singers.

*Your Voice: An Inside View*[^113] is an in-depth text on voice science and pedagogy. The new multimedia format of this publication includes a CD-Rom of both audio and video examples supporting the text’s contents. There are twelve chapters in this book, covering the following aspects: how to listen to singers, the physics of sound, resonance, formants, the scientific analysis of vocal sound, registers, anatomy, breathing, phonation, articulation, hearing, and vocal health. In Chapter 4: “The Source/Filter Theory of Voice Production—Formants,” McCoy explains that the ‘singer’s formant’ is not used in most amplified commercial styles of singing. He goes on to explain that in some MT singing, specifically that found in classic musicals, among stage actors, and public speakers, “some ring” and “a ringing timbre through a speaker’s formant” is sometimes used.[^114]

Chapter 6: “Voice Registers” contains a section titled “Belting.” In it McCoy states:

> Controversies surrounding belting may actually exceed those of all other registration issues. Classically oriented voice teachers often misunderstand this form of vocal production and have little aesthetic appreciation for either the sound quality or the literature for which it is required.”[^115]


[^114]: Ibid., 48.

[^115]: Ibid., 75.
Physiological and acoustic aspects of belting are described and a comparison of some similarities and differences between male operatic singing and female belting. The vocal production for both styles of singing share the use of thyroarytenoid-dominant production, whereas the harmonics for each are very diverse. Mr. McCoy goes on to explain why harmonics are so different, even though the glottal source of each style of singing is similar. This section describes the physiology of belting and some variation as to how this can be achieved.

In support of the need for this essay, the author concludes this section and chapter:

Contrary to the very sincere belief of many singing teachers, belting is not inherently unhealthy, nor is it accomplished by driving the full weight of the “chest voice” as high up the scale as possible…Correct belting is also a learned behavior…This author would similarly suggest that teachers only attempt to assist with belting if they truly understand the technique and love the repertoire. 116

*Bodymind & Voice: Foundations of Voice Education*117 is a voice science and pedagogical publication of five books contained in three volumes. Eighteen authors contribute to this text, including authors and co-editors Leon Thurman and Graham Welch. Areas covered in this text include voice anatomy, vocal function, and vocal health which are standard for this type of literature. Also included are “neuropsychobiology of perception, memory, learning, behavior, and health,” areas not typically covered in vocal pedagogy and voice science literature.

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Unlike the majority of published vocal pedagogy literature, this text is geared toward a broad range of voice use that includes speech and many styles of singing, as opposed to a traditional focus on voice use as it applies to Western classical music. In addressing belting the authors state that “classical” Western voice teachers often believe this style of vocal production to be harmful to voices. The authors explain that even though the term “belting” began being used to describe the singing of MT performers such as Ethel Merman in the 1940’s and 1950’s, this type of vocal production has existed worldwide for thousands of years and is at the core of expressive folk and popular singing.118

In Book V, Volume 3, Chapter 4, “vocally safe ‘belted’ singing skills for children, adolescents, and adults,” this definition of belting is given: “By definition, strong, belted singing involves strenuous laryngeal muscle use and high collision and shearing forces on the vocal folds.”119 This chapter recommends specific elements that need to be present in frequent belting to maintain vocal health and longevity. A list comparing physiological and acoustical differences of operatic singing with belting are given, as well as a list of “Voice protection skills that belt singers need in order to prevent voice disorders,” illustrating the importance of training in this specific type of singing, so prevalent in MT repertoire today. The authors also state: “Singers who belt regularly and inefficiently can easily develop chronic vocal fold swelling, vocal misuse dysphonia, and the more serious

118 Leon Thurman and Graham Welch, *Bodymind & Voice: Foundations of Voice Education* (Minnesota; Iowa; London: VoiceCare Network; National Center for Voice & Speech; Fairview Voice Center; Centre for Advanced Studies in Music Education, 2000), 783.

119 Ibid., 783.
vocal abnormalities….“120 This also supports the significance of appropriate voice training for MT performers hoping to perform consistently and healthfully, eight shows a week, in the many professional productions that require belting.

*Basics of Vocal Pedagogy: The Foundations and Process of Singing*,121 was written to be used as a text for collegiate vocal pedagogy classes. Although there is less specific information on the physiology or pedagogy of CCM vocal production, the author makes clear his belief that CCM “can be performed with functionally correct vocal production” (italics original).122 Mr. Ware also reminds readers that in addition to the wide acceptance of classical singing, CCM has also found a broad audience. This presents incentive for in-service voice teachers and students studying to teach voice to seek out CCM and classical pedagogies.

*The Versatile Vocalist*123 was written as a guide on the necessary adjustments in vocal production and demands required of singers performing in multiple genres. The text is organized into five chapters. The first offers a brief history of the use of microphones to amplify singers, influences on performance practices, and tools and strategies for preparation and rehearsing. Chapters two and three focus on microphone use in large and small venues with varying types of instrumentation, and strategies for transitioning from CCM to classical performances. Chapters four and five include

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120 Leon Thurman and Graham Welch, *Bodymind & Voice: Foundations of Voice Education* (Minnesota; Iowa; London: VoiceCare Network; National Center for Voice & Speech; Fairview Voice Center; Centre for Advanced Studies in Music Education, 2000), 784.


122 Ibid., 10.

pedagogical suggestions for working with amplified genres and transitioning between classical and amplified singing, as well as pedagogical suggestions for training singers to be as versatile as possible.

Dr. Lebon’s text is supported by a substantial list of research-based references. The author’s performance experience includes performances and/or work as: an international soloist with the U.S. Air Force Tops in Blues; a studio vocalist; network television throughout Texas and Florida; a featured soloist with jazz and concert bands; a solo recording artist; and as a classical soloist for oratorio performances. Dr. Lebon currently serves on the voice faculty at the University of Miami working with jazz and music theater students, teaching advanced vocal pedagogy coursework on voice disorders, and is a member of the Professional Voice Institute, devoted to the treatment of voice disorders. Dr. Lebon is also author of *The Professional Vocalist: A Handbook for Commercial Singers and Teachers*, and has served on the voice faculty at Belmont College.

In discussing pedagogy, Dr. Lebon cites research findings and the importance of developing proper vocal technique for belting in any kind of CCM repertoire, including MT singing, for vocal health and longevity. In discussing pedagogy for versatility, the author points out that although singing training in an academic environment has been based on Western classical technique and performance practices, vocal training must continue to develop to support the changing demands on MT performers. This includes the introduction of head microphones that amplify singers who must now project over an amplified pit. Dr. Lebon makes specific suggestions for vocal departments training

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singers in different genres and strongly advocates for a combination of voice faculty with not just higher education training, but resident artists with professional performance experience in the genres they teach. It is also considered essential that faculty members continue to educate themselves on the developments and changing trends in their genre, and that vocal departments raise the level of musicianship training of vocal students.
Chapter 6

RESEARCH FINDINGS

There is a growing demand for collegiate MT training and, as a result, numerous programs have emerged in colleges and universities throughout the United States. Concurrently, voice pedagogy and voice science has generated a body of research and literature supporting the importance of specialized MT singing and music training. All of the research for this essay has shown that this rapidly developing genre has its own unique performance demands, necessitating the development of MT pedagogies and training programs. A distinctive set of criteria specifically related to MT singing and music training was also revealed.

The literature review has found that there is not one guide or resource for assessing MT singing and music training for young, prospective college freshman. Therefore, the criteria discovered through this study is critical to effectively assess the singing and music training offered in baccalaureate MT programs for young, aspiring MT students choosing MT training for themselves.

Summary of Criteria

Required Program Resources and Opportunities

A major consideration in assessing the MT training offered at a college or university is the resources and opportunities academic institutions can provide. The research shows that in order to have a NASM and/or NAST accredited MT professional baccalaureate degree program, schools must provide the following:
Performance Opportunities

• range of cumulative workshop and full production performance opportunities in formal and informal settings
• beginning level students – workshop productions
• intermediate level students – participation in full productions
• advanced level students – several minor roles in full productions with orchestra
• advanced level students – at least one significant role in a full production with orchestra
• performance schedule must not interfere with development of basic skills and training, especially in formative training/education

Faculty and Facilities

• specialized faculty with appropriate level and duration of MT pedagogy training, MT performance training, and/or professional performing experience
• full MT production facilities
• workshop production facilities
• library with a wide range of MT scores, recordings and texts

Music Business Learning

Both NASM and NAST strongly recommend music business studies in the following areas:
Performance Training Areas

areas of training most emphasized in the literature, and based on current MT performance demands, can be grouped into three major categories: singing, coaching and musicianship. These training areas also closely mirror those performance qualities found to be essential for MT performers. The following comprises those training areas found to be fundamental for MT degree programs:

Singing

• develop a level of vocal technique and vocal conditioning to perform a substantial role within a full production
• develop ability to sing in a wide dynamic and vocal range consistently
• develop the ability to consistently project the singing voice and clearly articulate lyrics
• develop an understanding of and the ability to sing healthfully with belt, mixed, and head voice vocal production, and to know when it is appropriate to use each type of production

• develop the ability to sing with “bright and forward resonance qualities for belt and mix, as well as a more balanced timbre for legit”\textsuperscript{125}

• develop smooth transitions between registers with varying vocal production and the ability to sing with a speech-like resonance and articulation

• develop the flexibility to adapt vocal production to support a character and to maintain a unified approach transitioning between speech and singing

\textit{Coaching}

• develop role preparation/interpretation skills

• develop understanding of and ability to perform in as many musical styles found in MT as possible

• develop a broad knowledge of MT repertoire and styles

• develop further understanding of when to adapt vocal production to support a character and to maintain a unified approach transitioning between speech and singing

• develop ability to analyze music and lyrics

• develop auditioning skills which include the ability to select appropriate repertoire for a specific audition and how to build and organize a body of audition repertoire

• develop the ability to synthesize all performance areas and knowledge

**Musicianship Skills**

- learn the history of MT and its development, repertoire important to the genre’s development, the characteristics of different periods and styles and performance styles
- develop strong rhythmic and sight-reading skills
- develop basic keyboard skills to support learning music and music analysis
- develop the ability to analyze music and lyrics
- develop further understanding of MT repertoire and styles through analysis
- develop ability to learn and sing a melodic line within multiple parts, i.e. four-part harmony
- understanding of how to prepare for and conduct oneself in a rehearsal process

**Degree Classifications**

A joint policy statement of NASM, NAST, NASD, and NASAD in the Handbook clarifies the following major differences in baccalaureate degrees for MT programs:

- two types of baccalaureate degrees – professional and liberal arts
- professional degrees designed to provide training essential for MT professionals, with studies in the major field comprising two thirds of coursework
- liberal arts degrees are designed to offer broad coursework in general liberal arts studies, with the major field comprising one third of coursework
- professional degree titles are: Bachelor of Fine Arts in MT; or Bachelor of Music in MT
- liberal arts degree titles are: Bachelor of Arts; or Bachelor of Science
• professional degrees are recommended because they are designed to provide a professional level of MT training

Suggestions for Further Research

Although there has a growing body of research and literature focusing on many aspects of MT performing and training, there is still a need for further study. Based on the findings of this study, a non-academic and easily read college guide should be published that would assist prospective MT students to assess the music and singing training in baccalaureate degree programs. Additionally, similar studies should be conducted to develop criteria to assess the dance and theater training in MT degree programs. The criteria from these studies could be combined with the findings from this research to develop a college guide for prospective MT students that would encompass criteria for assessing the three primary performance areas of MT training programs.

There is a need for further research resulting in a wider range of training methods and programs for teachers of MT students. Other areas where there is still a demand for research-based literature and texts related to MT training include: the business-related aspects of pursuing and sustaining a career in MT; MT musicianship; MT repertoire by character type and level of difficulty; MT vocal pedagogies; and differences between male and female MT vocal production.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Christiansen, Philip A. “A Music Theater Program for Indiana University.” DMA Treatise, Florida State University, 2002.


APPENDIX A
NASM HANDBOOK, PUBLISHED MATERIALS AND WEB SITES

I. Published Materials and Web Sites

1. Standards
   a. Published materials concerning the institution and the music unit shall be clear, accurate, and readily available.
   b. A catalog or similar document(s) shall be published at least biennially and shall cover:
      (1) purposes;
      (2) size and scope;
      (3) curricula;
      (4) faculty;
      (5) administrators and trustees;
      (6) locale;
      (7) facilities;
      (8) costs and refund policies;
      (9) rules and regulations for conduct;
      (10) all quantitative, qualitative, and time requirements for admission, retention, and completion of programs and degrees and other credentials;
      (11) academic calendar;
(12) grievance and appeals procedures; and
(13) accreditation status with NASM and other appropriate accrediting agencies.

c. The institution shall have transfer of credit policies that (1) are publicly disclosed, and
(2) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of
credit earned at another institution of higher education.

d. Members of the Association having degree programs in music education and/or music
therapy shall state in their catalogs the registration, certification, and/or licensure to which
their curricula will lead.

e. Qualitative, quantitative and time requirements; costs; and academic calendars shall have
an evident and appropriate relationship to purposes, curriculum, and subject matters taught.

f. Program and degree titles shall be consistent with content.

g. When an institution or program offers work that is given academic credit by another
institution, the source of the credit and any credential to which it leads must be clearly
described.

h. Through means consistent with its purposes and resources (1) the institution or (2) the
music program, either separately or in conjunction with the institution, shall routinely
provide reliable data and information to the public concerning the achievement of its
purposes.

i. The institution and the music unit shall have readily available valid documentation for
any statements and/or promises regarding such matters as program excellence,
educational results, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or faculty.

j. Published materials must clearly distinguish those programs, courses, services, and
personnel available every academic year from those available on a less frequent basis.

k. Publications shall not list as current any courses not taught for two consecutive years that
will not be taught during the third consecutive year.

l. Catalogs, advertising, and other promotional materials shall clearly differentiate existing
and approved programs from those that are prospective or under consideration.

2. Guidelines

   a. Published materials include Internet Web sites and any other forms of information
distribution.

   b. In addition to a standard catalog, music units normally maintain published documents of
sufficient clarity and detail to facilitate understanding about all aspects of their work
among administrators, faculty, students, parents, and other constituencies.

J. Community Involvement

1. Standard. Institutions must publish any formal relationships and policies concerning
community involvement that are connected to curricular offerings.

2. Comment. Institutions vary in the intensity of their community involvement according to
their various objectives and types of program offerings. Usually, music units enjoy reciprocal
benefits from cooperating with local schools, performing groups, and arts organizations.
APPENDIX B

NASM HANDBOOK, STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR OPERA AND MUSICAL THEATER PROGRAMS

APPENDIX I.B.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR OPERA AND MUSICAL THEATRE PROGRAMS

National Association of Schools of Music
National Association of Schools of Theatre

The National Association of Schools of Music and the National Association of Schools of Theatre are the nationally recognized accrediting agencies for their respective disciplines. This set of statements concerning curricular programs combining studies in music and theatre was developed through a joint effort of NASM and NAST after a series of consultations with practitioners and educators. The statements should not be construed as endorsement of specific degree types, but rather reflect an analysis of the fields that utilize a combination of music and theatre skills with special attention to the educational resources supportive of these fields.

Accreditation by NASM or NAST is voluntary. Statements in institutional literature concerning the accreditation of the program shall be accurate and clear to the public. Accreditation by either NASM or NAST shall not be construed to signify accreditation by both parties, nor shall regional accreditation be construed as having provided professional review of such programs.

Section I. The Common Body of Knowledge and Skills for Career Entry

Individuals with career aspirations in opera or musical theatre face a wide variety of choices concerning the structure of training that will prepare them for careers as performing professionals. These include degree programs, private study, and apprentice programs in professional companies.

While there is no specific structure, format, or schedule of education and training that will be effective in every case, the singer-actor or actor-singer ready to embark on a professional career must possess a body of knowledge and skills. This intellectual and technical expertise may be gained in a variety of ways; however, the practicing professional demonstrates an integration and assimilation of the following:

A. Performance Skills

1. Voice production and technique sufficient to present complete roles in full productions.

2. Vocal interpretation and role preparation skills that enable understanding and performance of roles in a wide variety of styles and formats.

3. Musicianship, sight-singing competence, and analytic skills.

4. Theatre skills, acting competence, script analysis, stage movement and related physical skills such as mime, stage combat and fencing, modern dance, ballet, and period stylized dance. Understanding of basic production elements such as make-up, costume, sets and props, and lighting.

5. Language skills.

   a. For Opera: diction/pronunciation skills in English, Italian, German, and French; reading/speaking proficiency in Italian; and working knowledge of French and German.

   b. For Musical Theatre: diction/ pronunciation skills in English and dialects.
B. Professional Development

1. **Repertory.** Knowledge of the opera and/or musical theatre repertory, the history of its development, and the relationship of this history to styles of performance.

2. **Business.** Basic understanding of such elements as self-promotion, knowledge of the structures and practices of performing organizations, portfolio development, management, unions, contracts, tax structures, and professional ethics.

3. **Audition Technique.**

**Section 2. Developing the Common Body of Knowledge and Skills in Academic Programs**

Academic institutions provide a wide variety of resources to develop the common body of knowledge and skills. Many institutions will be able to provide curricula and resources appropriate for students at the beginning of their studies. However, relatively few institutions can provide a comprehensive program expected to produce a professional ready for career entry. Most schools will be on the spectrum between these two extremes.

Recognizing the wide variety of degree types and program objectives that address needs at various stages in completion of the common body of knowledge and skills, the following standards and guidelines are offered to provide general suggestions for an orderly progression of education and training.

A. **Objectives.** Using the common body of knowledge and skills as a guideline, each institution must develop a set of clearly defined and specific objectives for its programs in opera or musical theatre. Institutions offering professional degrees in voice performance should also have statements of their objectives with respect to opera or musical theatre training.

   All aspects of the opera or musical theatre training programs should be related to these objectives. The objectives themselves must be realistic in terms of the resources available to the institution.

B. **Admission, Retention, Graduation, and Advising.** Institutions with comprehensive objectives for the training of actor-singers or singer-actors must have clearly defined requirements for admission, retention, and graduation. A set of juries, examinations, and auditions should be integrated with an intensive advising program. The advising program should be related not only to the student’s progress in the academic program, but to progress in development of the common body of knowledge and skills.

   Quotes for admission should be correlated with the institution’s ability to provide performance experience at the appropriate level for all students enrolled in the program.

C. **Faculty, Facilities, Equipment, and Library.** In addition to the standards for all degree and diploma programs, institutions with comprehensive objectives in opera or musical theatre must provide:

   1. Specialized faculty appropriate to the scope and level of the program;
   2. Complete opera or musical theatre production facilities available and accessible for full productions; and
   3. Library resources for the study of roles through scores, recordings, and analytical texts. These should cover all standard works.

D. **Coordination Among the Music, Theatre, and Movement Components.** Institutions must provide opportunities for the development of theatre and movement skills at a level commensurate with the objectives and scope of the opera or musical theatre program.

   In multipurpose institutions where training in music, acting, and movement is provided by one or more units, or where there is an interdisciplinary structure for the degree program, arrangements for
coordination must be evident in the development, operation, and evaluation of the program. These arrangements must extend to the use of facilities as well.

E. Performance. In an educational setting with professional training objectives, it is essential to provide a cumulative series of performance experiences to mold and integrate the developing components of the common body of knowledge and skills. Institutions seeking to offer training at the early stages will need to provide workshop productions. Training at the intermediate level will involve full productions in which students may participate according to their levels of proficiency. At the most advanced levels, institutions must be able to provide sufficient full productions with orchestra to give degree candidates an opportunity to perform at least one significant role and several minor roles.

At all times, the choice and preparation of performance must be directly related to the education of singer-actors or actor-singers. Levels of vocal maturity must be carefully considered in the choice of repertoire. It is strongly recommended that institutions institute a system of checks and balances that maintains the appropriate educational focus to the performance program. This might include such systems as repertory committees involving representation beyond the opera/musical theatre faculty directly involved in productions.

The performance program should be regarded as an opportunity to synthesize the skills learned by discrete studies in the basic components of opera or musical theatre. A series of performances is not a substitute for formal training in such elements as voice, production, acting and movement, languages, etc. Therefore, the performance schedule for the individual student should not be so intensive that time is not available for the development of basic skills. This is especially important in the early years of education and training.

F. The Involvement of Professional Companies. Institutions concerned with the education and training of the singer-actor should establish the strongest feasible relationships with professional producing companies. This may include the involvement of company personnel as full-time or part-time faculty, the development of internship arrangements, and the integration of campus residencies in the training program for actor-singers or singer-actors. Long-term planning should be evident to ensure the continuity of the program. In areas where local professional companies are not in existence or relationships are not feasible, long-term plans should be made for the utilization of professional guest artists to supplement regular musical theatre instruction.

Section 3. General Guidelines: Undergraduate Academic Programs

A. Degree Types

1. Liberal Arts Degrees. Usually titled Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science, degrees meeting the standards for a liberal arts emphasis normally contain 30-45% content in the major. The primary curricular objective of this program is general studies in the liberal arts. Within the 30-45% of the degree devoted to the major, the objectives of the program will dictate the degree of emphasis that can be placed upon opera or musical theatre training.

2. Professional Degrees. Usually titled Bachelor of Music or Bachelor of Fine Arts, the professional degree normally requires at least 65% content in the major area. The primary curricular objective of the program is basic professional studies in the discipline. Within the 65% or more of the degree devoted to the major, the objectives of the program will dictate the degree of emphasis that can be placed upon opera or musical theatre training.

B. Opera. The requisite of vocal maturity for intensive training in performance combined with the broad scope of basic skills required for professional practice indicates that the undergraduate degree is inappropriate for a major in opera.

Normally, the undergraduate years will focus more on achieving competence in basic components of the common body of knowledge and skills, leaving major performance experience in complete roles to the graduate level and beyond. The professional baccalaureate degree in voice may be
organized to provide a pre-opera emphasis. Standards for this degree are provided in Section 4. below.

Degrees in voice and opera are reviewed by NASM during the accreditation process.

C. Musical Theatre. Professional degrees in musical theatre may be appropriate at the
undergraduate level. Standards for this degree may be found in Section 5. below. Institutions
offering areas of emphasis in musical theatre under the music or theatre major of a liberal arts or
professional degree should use these standards as guidelines in developing the specifics of this
program.

Degrees in musical theatre may be reviewed by NASM and/or NAST as appropriate during the
accreditation process.

Section 4. Standards for the Professional Baccalaureate Degree in Voice with an Emphasis in
Pre-Professional Studies in Opera

Baccalaureate degrees in voice performance may be organized with a variety of objectives. Some may
 emphasize a breadth of vocal experience while others will provide more focus on a particular aspect
of the profession.

When an institution wishes to offer a focused program preparing singers for advanced studies in opera,
the appropriate curricular structure is the Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance with an emphasis in
pre-professional studies in opera. When the resources outlined in Section 2. above are available at a level
to support the program, the offering of such a curriculum is justified.

A. Curricular Structure

1. Standard. Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to
develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a
professional baccalaureate degree in voice with an emphasis in pre-professional studies in
opera, as indicated below and in Section VIII. "All Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in
Music and All Undergraduate Degrees Leading to Teacher Certification" of the NASM
Handbook.

2. Guidelines. Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines:
studies in the major area, including performance studies, ensemble participation, opera
workshops and recitals, should comprise 25-35% of the program; supportive courses in music,
20-30%; studies in acting and movement, 15-20%; general studies, 20-30%; and electives,
approximately 5%. Studies in music, acting, and movement normally total at least 70% of the
curriculum.

B. Specific Competencies for General Studies. Overviews of history and psychology are useful in
opera performance.

C. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (in addition to those stated for all
degree programs):

1. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance. Studies in voice shall continue
throughout the entire degree program.

2. Solo and ensemble performance experience in a variety of formal and informal settings. A
senior recital is regarded as an essential experience, and a junior recital is recommended.

3. Opportunities for advanced studies in sight-singing. Studies in sight-singing should be
required for at least two years of the degree program.

4. Development of basic skills in acting and movement with emphasis on their applications in
opera performance practice.

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5. The study and use of foreign languages and diction are essential.

6. Opportunities for the performance of appropriate operatic roles in full productions with orchestra.

Section 5. Standards for the Professional Baccalaureate Degree in Musical Theatre

Degree programs in musical theatre include studies in music, theatre, and dance. Degree programs may have a primary emphasis in one of the disciplines. Normally, such programs are under the academic jurisdiction of the discipline emphasized. Another plan involves a more equal distribution of studies in the disciplines. Such plans may be administered by an interdepartmental committee or through one of the participating units.

Determination of the specific curricular plan and its administrative structure is the prerogative of the institution. The music component of a music theatre degree at an NASM-accredited institution will be reviewed by NASM when that component comprises at least 30% of the total curriculum. The theatre component of a musical theatre degree at an NAST-accredited institution will be reviewed by NAST when that component comprises at least 30% of the curriculum.

Use of the title Bachelor of Fine Arts is restricted to programs that closely approximate 65% coursework in one or more of the arts disciplines. Programs with less work in the arts should carry the title Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science.

A. Musical Theatre Degrees with a Music Emphasis

The text below is duplicated in its entirety in Section IX.H. of the Standards for Accreditation in the NASM Handbook.

The standards statements below refer to professional baccalaureate programs in musical theatre where music is the emphasis of the curriculum. Some of the titles applied to these programs are: Bachelor of Music in Musical Theatre; Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre. These programs are reviewed for accreditation by NASM.

1. Curricular Structure

   a. Standard. Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate degree in musical theatre with an emphasis in music, as indicated below and in Section VIII. "All Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in Music and All Undergraduate Degrees Leading to Teacher Certification" of the NASM Handbook.

   b. Guidelines. Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines: studies in the major music area and supportive courses in music shall total at least 50% of the curriculum; studies in theatre and dance, 20-25%; general studies, 20-25%; electives, approximately 5%. See Section III.C. "Forms of Instruction, Requirements, and Electives" of the NASM Handbook.

2. Specific Guideline for General Studies. Studies in the career-related business aspects of musical theatre are strongly recommended.

3. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (in addition to those stated for all professional music degree programs):

   a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as a singer-actor. Studies in voice shall continue throughout the entire degree program.

   b. Achievement of a high level of skill in sight-singing.

   c. Thorough development of skills in acting.
d. Basic development of dance and movement skills appropriate to musical theatre.

e. Opportunities for performances in workshop and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings. Performance of a significant role in at least one full production during advanced study is regarded as an essential experience.

f. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions.

B. Musical Theatre Degrees with a Theatre Emphasis

The text below is duplicated in its entirety in Section IX.D. of the Standards for Accreditation in the NAST Handbook.

The standards statements below refer to professional baccalaureate programs in musical theatre where theatre is the emphasis of the curriculum. The title normally applied to this program is the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre. These programs are reviewed for accreditation by NAST.

1. Curricular Structure

a. Standard. Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate degree in musical theatre with an emphasis in theatre as indicated below and in Section VIII. “All Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in Theatre” of the NAST Handbook.

b. Guidelines. Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines: studies in the major theatre area and supportive courses in theatre and dance shall total at least 30% of the curriculum; studies in music, 20-25%; general studies, 20-25%; electives, approximately 5%. See Section III.C. “Forms of Instruction, Requirements, and Electives” of the NAST Handbook.

2. Specific Guidelines for General Studies. Studies in the career-related business aspects of musical theatre are strongly recommended.

3. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (in addition to those stated for all professional theatre degree programs)

a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as an actor-singer. Studies in acting shall continue throughout the entire degree program.

b. Thorough development of skills in acting and skills in dance as appropriate to musical theatre.

c. Thorough development in basic musical skills including voice performance, musicianship, and music theory. Studies in voice should continue throughout the degree program.

d. Opportunities to develop a high level of skill in sight-singing.

e. Opportunities for performance in workshops and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings. Performance of a significant role in at least one full production during advanced study is regarded as an essential experience.

f. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions.
C. Interdisciplinary Degree in Musical Theatre. The standards statements below refer to professional baccalaureate programs in musical theatre where studies in music, theatre, and dance are combined in an interdisciplinary manner with no particular discipline having significant emphasis. The title most appropriate for such programs is Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre. These programs are reviewed by NASM and/or NAST for accreditation under provisions outlined in the second paragraph of Section 5.

1. Curricular Structure
   a. Standard. Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate interdisciplinary degree in musical theatre.
   b. Guidelines. Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines: studies in musical theatre including voice and acting, should comprise 25-35% of the curriculum; supportive courses in music and theatre, 20-30%; studies in dance and movement, 10-20%; general studies, 20-30%; electives, approximately 5%. Studies in music, acting, and movement normally total at least 70% of the curriculum. See Section III.C. “Forms of Instruction, Requirements, and Electives” in the Standards portion of the NASM Handbook and/or the NAST Handbook.

2. Specific Competencies for General Studies. Studies in the career-related business aspects of musical theatre are strongly recommended.

3. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (in addition to those stated for all degree programs):
   a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as a singer-actor or actor-singer. Studies in musical theatre shall continue throughout the entire degree program.
   b. Thorough development of skills in acting.
   c. Thorough development in basic musical skills including voice performance, musicianship, and music theory.
   d. Basic development of dance and movement skills appropriate to musical theatre.
   e. Opportunities to develop a high level of skill in sight-singing.
   f. Opportunities for performance in workshops and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings. Performance of a significant role in at least one full production during advanced study is regarded as an essential experience.
   g. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions.

Section 6. General Guidelines: Graduate Academic Programs

A. Degree Types. Graduate degree objectives vary widely among institutions. Normally, any graduate degree may be characterized as initial or terminal, general or specific, research-oriented or practice-oriented.

Initial graduate degrees usually carry the title Master of Arts, Master of Science, or Master of Music, and require at least 30 semester hours (or 45 quarter hours) beyond the baccalaureate. Terminal graduate degrees usually carry the title Master of Fine Arts, Doctor of Musical Arts, or Doctor of Philosophy, and require at least 60 semester hours (or 90 quarter hours) beyond the baccalaureate.

General degrees are usually offered at the initial level only and provide comprehensive training in a specific discipline. Specific degrees are offered at both levels and provide a specialized focus in a specific component of a larger discipline.
Research-oriented and practice-oriented degrees are offered in all the categories outlined above. The title Doctor of Philosophy is normally reserved for the terminal research-oriented degree.

Standards and guidelines for graduate programs in music, theatre, and dance are found in the accreditation standards of NASM, NAST, and NASD respectively.

B. Graduate Degrees in Voice Performance and Acting. Institutions may offer studies for singer-actors or actor-singers as an area of emphasis in specific graduate degrees with majors in voice performance and/or acting. Within the frameworks of the general music or theatre standards for these degrees, the objective of the program will indicate the degree of emphasis on training in opera or musical theatre.

C. Graduate Degrees in Opera and Musical Theatre. Institutions may offer graduate degrees with majors in opera or musical theatre. In these degree programs, attention should be given to reaching completion of the common body of knowledge and skills.

Upon completion of a graduate program with a focus in opera or musical theatre performance, the student will have performed appropriate opera or musical theatre roles.

Section 7. Standards for Graduate Degrees in Opera or Musical Theatre Performance

Accreditation of graduate degrees in opera or musical theatre performance are based on the demonstration of appropriate objectives, resources, curricula, admission/retention criteria, and performance policies to ensure that graduates have achieved sufficient preparation in the common body of knowledge and skills for entry into the profession. Opportunities for each candidate to perform at least one significant role and several minor roles in settings that are close approximations of professional circumstances are considered essential.

A. Master's Degrees. Master's degrees in opera are considered specific master's degrees in music and follow the general standards for such degrees articulated by NASM. These standards require that studies in the major area comprise as much as two-thirds, or at least one-third of the curriculum. The remainder is coursework in supportive areas. For Standards for the 30-semester hour master's degree in Opera Performance, please see the NASM Handbook, Section XIV., "Specific Master's Degrees."

Master’s degrees in musical theatre are considered specific master’s degrees in music or theatre and follow the standards for such degrees articulated by NASM or NAST. Interdisciplinary degrees at the graduate level will be treated for accreditation purposes as special cases by NASM and/or NAST as appropriate.

B. The Master of Fine Arts or Master of Musical Arts in Opera Performance

1. Degree Format. The degree requires at least 60 semester hours of graduate study. A residence requirement of at least two academic years is essential.

2. Operational Standards and Guidelines (in addition to those for all graduate programs, Sections X, XI, and XII):

   a. Admission. Admission should be limited to only those students who have completed a baccalaureate or master's program in music and who demonstrate sufficient progress in the common body of knowledge and skills for opera/musical theatre professionals to project their complete preparation for career entry upon graduation from the program.

   A specific set of examinations must be developed by the institution to generate this assessment.

   Quotas must be established correlated to the institution's ability to provide performance experience in significant roles in full production with orchestra.
b. **Faculty.** Faculty must be provided who, by professional experience and/or demonstrated teaching competence and/or earned degrees, can be expected to assist the student in fully achieving the common body of skills and knowledge required for career entry.

Institutions will accomplish this in various ways depending upon their locations and resources. However, it is expected that specialized faculty will be available for each aspect of the common body of knowledge and skills.

c. **Facilities and Equipment.** In addition to appropriate facilities for music study, complete opera/musical theatre production facilities must be available and accessible throughout the year for full productions.

d. **Library.** Resources for the study of roles through recordings, scores, and analytical texts must be available. These should cover all standard works.

e. **Coordination With Theatre Units.** In multipurpose institutions where acting and movement training are provided by the theatre unit, or where there is an interdisciplinary structure for the degree program, arrangements for coordination and cooperation between the music unit and the theatre unit must be evident. This must extend to facilities use as well.

3. **Curricular Requirements**

a. **Program Structure.** Studies in opera, including music, theatre, and diction studies as outlined in the common body of knowledge and skills, shall total at least 55-60% of the curriculum; at least 25-30% of the curriculum must be in courses which integrate the elements of opera performance; other studies in music such as history-literature and theory-analysis comprise at least 15% of the total curriculum.

b. **Performance Requirements.** Students must present at least two concert-length public performances. At least one of these shall be a significant role in a full opera production with orchestra. These performances may serve as the thesis.

Institutions should offer the advanced graduate program in opera/musical theatre performance only if students can be afforded the opportunity for regular opera/musical theatre performance experience under faculty supervision in settings that replicate professional preparation and production.

c. **Guidelines for Curricular Studies.** Advanced studies in sight-singing are required, and advanced studies in musical analysis to assist the learning of roles is strongly recommended.

Studies in the physiology of voice production are encouraged.

Coursework and experience that develop understanding and competence in business and professional techniques are strongly recommended.

d. **Final Comprehensive Examinations and Auditions.** A series of comprehensive examinations designated to test professional competence in the common body of knowledge and skills shall be passed as a requirement for graduation.

C. **Doctoral Degrees.** A doctoral degree indicates the completion of professional preparation. The specific methods for achieving this are the prerogative of the institution under the general standards for graduate degrees applied by NASM and NAST.
APPENDIX C
NASM HANDBOOK, BACCALAUREATE DEGREES
IN THE ARTS DISCIPLINES

APPENDIX III.C.

BACCALAUREATE DEGREES IN THE ARTS DISCIPLINES
A Joint Policy Statement of
National Association of Schools of Art and Design
National Association of Schools of Dance
National Association of Schools of Music
National Association of Schools of Theatre

Section 1. Curricular Structure

Institutions of higher education in the United States prepare individuals for a wide variety of vocations. Because each of these vocations has unique requirements for professional practice, educational patterns vary discipline by discipline.

The four-year baccalaureate degree is the primary format for education at the undergraduate level. This degree normally contains at least 120 semester hours of coursework. Curricula comprising these hours are usually divided among required courses in the major, required courses in general studies, and electives. Each institution of higher education develops degree requirements based upon a proportional mix of these elements.

There are two generic types of baccalaureate degrees that prepare individuals for work in the professions in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts and design. Consistent with general academic practice, these are labeled “professional” degrees and “liberal arts” degrees.

The professional degree is intended to provide intensive training in the intellectual and physical skills necessary to arts professionals. Because physical skills development is critical during the 18–22 year period, many young artists do not wish to risk postponement of serious study until the graduate years. Since physical skills are meaningless without accompanying intellectual development, and since both are time-consuming activities requiring daily practice, the professional degree normally involves at least two-thirds of the curriculum in the major field. This may include supportive courses directly and legitimately related to professional practice of the disciplines. The remaining portion is divided between general studies and electives.

Professional degrees preparing specialists in the arts for the public schools or developing creative arts therapists will include in the major field interdisciplinary and professional studies in such areas as education and psychology.

By contrast, the liberal arts degree emphasizes a broad program of general studies. The major field normally occupies one-third of the curriculum with coverage of the discipline being broad in scope. The remaining portion is divided between general studies and electives.

Section 2. Degree Titles

Professional degrees normally containing at least sixty-five percent coursework in the major area (or the major area and related professional studies in degrees for arts therapists, elementary/secondary teachers, and certain other specialist professions, when the total in the arts/design discipline is no less than fifty percent) normally carry the title Bachelor of Fine Arts (for the fields of dance, theatre, and visual arts and design) or Bachelor of Music. Institutions designate specific coursework for specialty areas; for example, the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting, Dance Performance, or Acting, and the Bachelor of Music in Composition.
Interdisciplinary degrees in such areas as musical theatre and stage design must have at least sixty-five percent coursework in the arts disciplines involved to carry the title Bachelor of Fine Arts or Bachelor of Music.

Liberal arts degrees normally containing at least thirty percent coursework in the major area carry the title Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science with the generic name of the discipline appended; for example, Bachelor of Arts in Theatre, Bachelor of Arts in Dance. Within these programs various emphases may be possible through minimal variations on the basic plan of coursework.

It is recognized that some institutions are chartered to offer only the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree. When these institutions offer a baccalaureate degree meeting "professional" degree standards, the degree is normally designated Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science with the specific major area; for example, Bachelor of Science in Graphic Design or Bachelor of Arts in Music Theory.

Section 3. National Standards and Practice

Within the degree formats outlined above, each institution develops the precise structure and detail of the curriculum for each degree program. This development is consistent with the unique goals and resources of the institution.

In each of the arts disciplines, academic institutions have created associations specifically concerned with the development of educational standards and operational procedures. These organizations, through their member institutions, work to develop overall frameworks that outline the attributes of training programs for arts professionals while encouraging diversity among institutions and respect for operational integrity within institutions. Each of these organizations works through the system of voluntary accreditation. Each publishes a set of standards and guidelines as the basis for accreditation reviews which give greater detail and definition to the baccalaureate degree definitions outlined in this document. The associations also publish standards and guidelines for graduate degrees.
APPENDIX I.B.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR OPERA AND MUSICAL THEATRE PROGRAMS

National Association of Schools of Music
National Association of Schools of Theatre

The National Association of Schools of Music and the National Association of Schools of Theatre are the nationally recognized accrediting agencies for their respective disciplines. This set of statements concerning curricular programs combining studies in music and theatre was developed through a joint effort of NASM and NAST after a series of consultations with practitioners and educators. The statements should not be construed as endorsement of specific degree types, but rather reflect an analysis of the fields that utilize a combination of music and theatre skills with special attention to the educational resources supportive of these fields.

Accreditation by NASM or NAST is voluntary. Statements in institutional literature concerning the accreditation of the program shall be accurate and clear to the public. Accreditation by either NASM or NAST shall not be construed to signify accreditation by both parties, nor shall regional accreditation be construed as having provided professional review of such programs.

Section 1. The Common Body of Knowledge and Skills for Career Entry

Individuals with career aspirations in opera or musical theatre face a wide variety of choices concerning the structure of training that will prepare them for careers as performing professionals. These include degree programs, private study, and apprentice programs in professional companies.

While there is no specific structure, format, or schedule of education and training that will be effective in every case, the actor-singer or singer-actor ready to embark on a professional career must possess a body of knowledge and skills. This intellectual and technical expertise may be gained in a variety of ways; however, the practicing professional demonstrates an integration and assimilation of the following:

A. Performance Skills

1. Voice production and technique sufficient to present complete roles in full productions.

2. Vocal interpretation and role preparation skills that enable understanding and performance of roles in a wide variety of styles and formats.

3. Musicianship, sight-singing competence, and analytic skills.

4. Theatre skills, acting competence, script analysis, stage movement and related physical skills such as mime, stage combat and fencing, modern dance, ballet, and period stylized dance. Understanding of basic production elements such as make-up, costume, sets and props, and lighting.

5. Language skills.
   a. For Opera: diction/pronunciation skills in English, Italian, German, and French; reading/speaking proficiency in Italian; and working knowledge of French and German.
   b. For Musical Theatre: diction/pronunciation skills in English and dialects.
B. Professional Development

1. Repertory. Knowledge of the opera and/or musical theatre repertory, the history of its development, and the relationship of this history to styles of performance.

2. Business. Basic understanding of such elements as self promotion, knowledge of the structures and practices of performing organizations, portfolio development, management, unions, contracts, tax structures, and professional ethics.

3. Audition Technique.

Section 2. Developing the Common Body of Knowledge and Skills in Academic Programs

Academic institutions provide a wide variety of resources to develop the common body of knowledge and skills. Many institutions will be able to provide curricula and resources appropriate for students at the beginning of their studies. However, relatively few institutions can provide a comprehensive program expected to produce a professional ready for career entry. Most schools will be on the spectrum between these two extremes.

Recognizing the wide variety of degree types and program objectives that address needs at various stages in completion of the common body of knowledge and skills, the following standards and guidelines are offered to provide general suggestions for an orderly progression of education and training.

A. Objectives. Using the common body of knowledge and skills as a guideline, each institution must develop a set of clearly defined and specific objectives for its programs in opera or musical theatre. Institutions offering professional degrees in voice performance should also have statements of their objectives with respect to opera or musical theatre training.

All aspects of the opera or musical theatre training programs should be related to these objectives. The objectives themselves must be realistic in terms of the resources available to the institution.

B. Admission, Retention, Graduation, and Advising. Institutions with comprehensive objectives for the training of actor-singers or singer-actors must have clearly defined requirements for admission, retention, and graduation. A set of juries, examinations, and auditions should be integrated with an intensive advising program. The advising program should be related not only to the student’s progress in the academic program, but to progress in development of the common body of knowledge and skills.

Quotas for admission should be correlated with the institution’s ability to provide performance experience at the appropriate level for all students enrolled in the program.

C. Faculty, Facilities, Equipment, and Library. In addition to the standards for all degree and diploma programs, institutions with comprehensive objectives in opera or musical theatre must provide:

1. Specialized faculty appropriate to the scope and level of the program;

2. Complete opera or musical theatre production facilities available and accessible for full productions; and

3. Library resources for the study of roles through scores, recordings, and analytical texts. These should cover all standard works.
D. **Coordination among the Music, Theatre, and Movement Components.** Institutions must provide opportunities for the development of theatre and movement skills at a level commensurate with the objectives and scope of the opera or musical theatre program.

In multipurpose institutions where training in music, acting, and movement is provided by one or more units, or where there is an interdisciplinary structure for the degree program, arrangements for coordination must be evident in the development, operation, and evaluation of the program. These arrangements must extend to the use of facilities as well.

E. **Performance.** In an educational setting with professional training objectives, it is essential to provide a cumulative series of performance experiences to mold and integrate the developing components of the common body of knowledge and skills. Institutions seeking to offer training at the early stages will need to provide workshop productions. Training at the intermediate level will involve full productions in which students may participate according to their levels of proficiency. At the most advanced levels, institutions must be able to provide sufficient full productions with orchestra to give degree candidates an opportunity to perform at least one significant role and several minor roles.

At all times, the choice and preparation of performance must be directly related to the education of actor-singers or singer-actors. Levels of vocal maturity must be carefully considered in the choice of repertory. It is strongly recommended that institutions institute a system of checks and balances that maintains the appropriate educational focus to the performance program. This might include such systems as repertory committees involving representation beyond the opera/musical theatre faculty directly involved in productions.

The performance program should be regarded as an opportunity to synthesize the skills learned by discrete studies in the basic components of opera or musical theatre. A series of performances is not a substitute for formal training in such elements as voice, production, acting and movement, languages, etc. Therefore, the performance schedule for the individual student should not be so intensive that time is not available for the development of basic skills. This is especially important in the early years of education and training.

F. **The Involvement of Professional Companies.** Institutions concerned with the education and training of the singer-actor should establish the strongest feasible relationships with professional producing companies. This may include the involvement of company personnel as full-time or part-time faculty, the development of internship arrangements, and the integration of campus residencies in the training program for actor-singers or singer-actors. Long-term planning should be evident to ensure the continuity of the program. In areas where local professional companies are not in existence or relationships are not feasible, long-term plans should be made for the utilization of professional guest artists to supplement regular musical theatre instruction.

Section 3. General Guidelines: Undergraduate Academic Programs

A. **Degree Types**

1. **Liberal Arts Degrees.** Usually titled *Bachelor of Arts* or *Bachelor of Science,* degrees meeting the standards for a *liberal arts* emphasis normally contain 30-45% content in the major. The primary curricular objective of this program is general studies in the liberal arts. Within the 30-45% of the degree devoted to the major, the objectives of the program will dictate the degree of emphasis that can be placed upon opera or musical theatre training.

2. **Professional Degrees.** Usually titled *Bachelor of Music* or *Bachelor of Fine Arts,* the *professional* degree normally requires at least 65% content in the major area. The primary curricular objective of the program is basic professional studies in the discipline. Within the
65% or more of the degree devoted to the major, the objectives of the program will dictate the degree of emphasis that can be placed upon opera or musical theatre training.

B. Opera. The requisite of vocal maturity for intensive training in performance combined with the broad scope of basic skills required for professional practice indicates that the undergraduate degree is inappropriate for a major in opera.

Normally, the undergraduate years will focus more on achieving competence in basic components of the common body of knowledge and skills, leaving major performance experience in complete roles to the graduate level and beyond. The professional baccalaureate degree in voice may be organized to provide a pre-opera emphasis. Standards for this degree are provided in Section 4. below.

Degrees in voice and opera are reviewed by NASM during the accreditation process.

C. Musical Theatre. Professional degrees in musical theatre may be appropriate at the undergraduate level. Standards for this degree may be found in Section 5. below. Institutions offering areas of emphasis in musical theatre under the music or theatre major of a liberal arts or professional degree should use these standards as guidelines in developing the specifics of this program.

Degrees in musical theatre may be reviewed by NASM and/or NAST as appropriate during the accreditation process.

Section 4. Standards for the Professional Baccalaureate Degree in Voice with an Emphasis in Pre-Professional Studies in Opera

Baccalaureate degrees in voice performance may be organized with a variety of objectives. Some may emphasize a breadth of vocal experience while others will provide more focus on a particular aspect of the profession.

When an institution wishes to offer a focused program preparing singers for advanced studies in opera, the appropriate curricular structure is the Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance with an emphasis in pre-professional studies in opera. When the resources outlined in Section 2. above are available at a level to support the program, the offering of such a curriculum is justified.

A. Curricular Structure

1. Standard. Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate degree in voice with an emphasis in pre-professional studies in opera.

2. Guidelines. Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines: studies in the major area, including performance studies, ensemble participation, opera workshops and recitals, should comprise 25-35% of the program; supportive courses in music, 20-30%; studies in acting and movement, 15-20%; general studies, 20-30%; and electives, approximately 5%. Studies in music, acting, and movement normally total at least 70% of the curriculum.

B. Specific Competencies for General Studies. Overviews of history and psychology are useful in opera performance.
C. **Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (in addition to those stated for all degree programs):**

1. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance. Studies in voice shall continue throughout the entire degree program.

2. Solo and ensemble performance experience in a variety of formal and informal settings. A senior recital is regarded as an essential experience, and a junior recital is recommended.

3. Opportunities for advanced studies in sight-singing. Studies in sight-singing should be required for at least two years of the degree program.

4. Development of basic skills in acting and movement with emphasis on their applications in opera performance practice.

5. The study and use of foreign languages and diction are essential. ([This applies only to degrees in Opera Performance.](#))

6. Opportunities for the performance of appropriate operatic roles in full productions with orchestra.

**Section 5. Standards for the Professional Baccalaureate Degree in Musical Theatre**

Degree programs in musical theatre include studies in music, theatre, and dance. Degree programs may have a primary emphasis in one of the disciplines. Normally, such programs are under the academic jurisdiction of the discipline emphasized. Another plan involves a more equal distribution of studies in the disciplines. Such plans may be administered by an interdepartmental committee or through one of the participating units.

Determination of the specific curricular plan and its administrative structure is the prerogative of the institution. The music component of a music theatre degree at an NASM-accredited institution will be reviewed by NASM when that component comprises at least 30% of the total curriculum. The theatre component of a musical theatre degree at an NAST-accredited institution will be reviewed by NASM when that component comprises at least 30% of the curriculum.

Use of the title *Bachelor of Fine Arts* is restricted to programs that closely approximate 65% coursework in one or more of the arts disciplines. Programs with less work in the arts should carry the title *Bachelor of Arts* or *Bachelor of Science*.

**A. Musical Theatre Degrees with a Music Emphasis**

The text below is duplicated in its entirety in Section IX.H. of the Standards for Accreditation in the NASM Handbook.

The standards statements below refer to professional baccalaureate programs in musical theatre where music is the emphasis of the curriculum. Some of the titles applied to these programs are: Bachelor of Music in Musical Theatre; Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre. These programs are reviewed for accreditation by NASM.

1. **Curricular Structure**

   a. **Standard.** Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate degree in musical theatre with an emphasis in music, as indicated below and in Section VIII. "All Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in Music and All Undergraduate Degrees Leading to Teacher Certification" of the NASM Handbook.
b. **Guidelines.** Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines: studies in the major music area and supportive courses in music shall total at least 50% of the curriculum; studies in theatre and dance, 20-25%; general studies, 20-25%; electives, approximately 5%. See Section III.C. “Forms of Instruction, Requirements, and Electives” of the NASM Handboook.

2. **Specific Guideline for General Studies.** Studies in the career-related business aspects of musical theatre are strongly recommended.

3. **Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (in addition to those stated for all professional music degree programs):**

   a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as a singer-actor. Studies in voice shall continue throughout the entire degree program.
   
   b. Achievement of a high level of skill in sight-singing.
   
   c. Thorough development of skills in acting.
   
   d. Basic development of dance and movement skills appropriate to musical theatre.
   
   e. Opportunities for performances in workshop and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings. Performance of a significant role in at least one full production during advanced study is regarded as an essential experience.
   
   f. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions.

B. **Musical Theatre Degrees with a Theatre Emphasis**

| The text below is duplicated in its entirety in Section IX.D. of the Standards for Accreditation in the NAST Handbook. |

The standards statements below refer to professional baccalaureate programs in musical theatre where theatre is the emphasis of the curriculum. The title normally applied to this program is the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre. These programs are reviewed for accreditation by NAST.

1. **Curricular Structure**

   a. **Standard.** Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate degree in musical theatre with an emphasis in theatre as indicated below and in Section VIII. “All Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in Theatre” of the NAST Handbook.

   b. **Guidelines.** Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines: studies in the major theatre area and supportive courses in theatre and dance shall total at least 50% of the curriculum; studies in music, 20-25%; general studies, 20-25%; electives, approximately 5%. See Section III.C. “Forms of Instruction, Requirements, and Electives” of the NAST Handbook.

2. **Specific Guidelines for General Studies.** Studies in the career-related business aspects of musical theatre are strongly recommended.
3. **Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities** *(in addition to those stated for all professional theatre degree programs)*

   a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as an actor-singer. Studies in acting shall continue throughout the entire degree program.

   b. Thorough development of skills in acting and skills in dance as appropriate to musical theatre.

   c. Thorough development in basic musical skills including voice performance, musicianship, and music theory. Studies in voice should continue throughout the degree program.

   d. Opportunities to develop a high level of skill in sight-singing.

   e. Opportunities for performance in workshops and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings. Performance of a significant role in at least one full production during advanced study is regarded as an essential experience.

   f. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions.

C. **Interdisciplinary Degree in Musical Theatre.** The standards statements below refer to professional baccalaureate programs in musical theatre where studies in music, theatre, and dance are combined in an interdisciplinary manner with no particular discipline having significant emphasis. The title most appropriate for such programs is Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre. These programs are reviewed by NASM and/or NAST for accreditation under provisions outlined in the second paragraph of Section 5.

1. **Curricular Structure**

   a. **Standard.** Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate interdisciplinary degree in musical theatre.

   b. **Guidelines.** Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines: studies in musical theatre including voice and acting, should comprise 25-35% of the curriculum; supportive courses in music and theatre, 20-30%; studies in dance and movement, 10-20%; general studies, 20-30%; electives, approximately 5%. Studies in music, acting, and movement normally total at least 70% of the curriculum. See Section III.C. “Forms of Instruction, Requirements, and Electives” in the Standards portion of the NASM Handbook and/or the NAST Handbook.

2. **Specific Competencies for General Studies.** Studies in the career-related business aspects of musical theatre are strongly recommended.

3. **Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities** *(in addition to those stated for all degree programs):*

   a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as a singer-actor or actor-singer. Studies in musical theatre shall continue throughout the entire degree program.

   b. Thorough development in skills in acting.

   c. Thorough development in basic musical skills including voice performance, musicianship, and music theory.
d. Basic development of dance and movement skills appropriate to musical theatre.

e. Opportunities to develop a high level of skill in sight-singing.

f. Opportunities for performance in workshops and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings. Performance of a significant role in at least one full production during advanced study is regarded as an essential experience.

g. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions.

Section 6. General Guidelines: Graduate Academic Programs

A. Degree Types. Graduate degree objectives vary widely among institutions. Normally, any graduate degree may be characterized as initial or terminal, general or specific, research-oriented or practice-oriented.

Initial graduate degrees usually carry the title Master of Arts, Master of Science, or Master of Music, and require at least 30 semester hours (or 45 quarter hours) beyond the baccalaureate. Terminal graduate degrees usually carry the title Master of Fine Arts, Doctor of Musical Arts, or Doctor of Philosophy, and require at least 60 semester hours (or 90 quarter hours) beyond the baccalaureate.

General degrees are usually offered at the initial level only and provide comprehensive training in a specific discipline. Specific degrees are offered at both levels and provide a specialized focus in a specific component of a larger discipline.

Research-oriented and practice-oriented degrees are offered in all the categories outlined above. The title Doctor of Philosophy is normally reserved for the terminal research-oriented degree.

Standards and guidelines for graduate programs in music, theatre, and dance are found in the accreditation standards of NASM, NAST, and NASD respectively.

B. Graduate Degrees in Voice Performance and Acting. Institutions may offer studies for singer-actors or actor-singers as an area of emphasis in specific graduate degrees with majors in voice performance and/or acting. Within the frameworks of the general music or theatre standards for these degrees, the objective of the program will indicate the degree of emphasis on training in opera or musical theatre.

C. Graduate Degrees in Opera and Musical Theatre. Institutions may offer graduate degrees with majors in opera or musical theatre. In these degree programs, attention should be given to reaching completion of the common body of knowledge and skills.

Upon completion of a graduate program with a focus in opera or musical theatre performance, the student will have performed appropriate opera or musical theatre roles.

Section 7. Standards for Graduate Degrees in Opera or Musical Theatre Performance

Accreditation of graduate degrees in opera or musical theatre performance are based on the demonstration of appropriate objectives, resources, curricula, admission/retention criteria, and performance policies to ensure that graduates have achieved sufficient preparation in the common body of knowledge and skills for entry into the profession. Opportunities for each candidate to perform at least one significant role and several minor roles in settings that are close approximations of professional circumstances are considered essential.
A. **Master's Degrees.** Master's degrees in opera are considered specific master's degrees in music and follow the general standards for such degrees articulated by NASM. These standards require that studies in the major area comprise as much as two-thirds, or at least one-third of the curriculum. The remainder is coursework in supportive areas. For Standards for the 30-semester hour master's degree in Opera Performance, please see the NASM Handbook, Section XIV., "Specific Master's Degrees."

Master's degrees in musical theatre are considered specific master's degrees in music or theatre and follow the standards for such degrees articulated by NASM or NAST. Interdisciplinary degrees at the graduate level will be treated for accreditation purposes as special cases by NASM and/or NAST as appropriate.

B. **The Master of Fine Arts or Master of Musical Arts in Opera Performance**

1. **Degree Format.** The degree requires at least 60 semester hours of graduate study. A residence requirement of at least two academic years is essential.

2. **Operational Standards and Guidelines (in addition to those for all graduate programs, Sections X., XI., and XII.):**

   a. **Admission.** Admission should be limited to only those students who have completed a baccalaureate or master's program in music and who demonstrate sufficient progress in the common body of knowledge and skills for opera/musical theatre professionals to project their complete preparation for career entry upon graduation from the program.

      A specific set of examinations must be developed by the institution to generate this assessment.

      Quotas must be established correlated to the institution's ability to provide performance experience in significant roles in full production with orchestra.

   b. **Faculty.** Faculty must be provided who, by professional experience and/or demonstrated teaching competence and/or earned degrees, can be expected to assist the student in fully achieving the common body of skills and knowledge required for career entry.

      Institutions will accomplish this in various ways depending upon their locations and resources. However, it is expected that specialized faculty will be available for each aspect of the common body of knowledge and skills.

   c. **Facilities and Equipment.** In addition to appropriate facilities for music study, complete opera/musical theatre production facilities must be available and accessible throughout the year for full productions.

   d. **Library.** Resources for the study of roles through recordings, scores, and analytical texts must be available. These should cover all standard works.

   e. **Coordination with Theatre Units.** In multipurpose institutions where acting and movement training are provided by the theatre unit, or where there is an interdisciplinary structure for the degree program, arrangements for coordination and cooperation between the music unit and the theatre unit must be evident. This must extend to facilities use as well.
3. **Curricular Requirements**

a. **Program Structure.** Studies in opera, including music, theatre, and diction studies as outlined in the common body of knowledge and skills, shall total at least 55-60% of the curriculum; at least 25-30% of the curriculum must be in courses which integrate the elements of opera performance; other studies in music such as history-literature and theory-analysis comprise at least 15% of the total curriculum.

b. **Performance Requirements.** Students must present at least two concert-length public performances. At least one of these shall be a significant role in a full opera production with orchestra. These performances may serve as the thesis.

Institutions should offer the advanced graduate program in opera/musical theatre performance only if students can be afforded the opportunity for regular opera/musical theatre performance experience under faculty supervision in settings that replicate professional preparation and production.

c. **Guidelines for Curricular Studies.** Advanced studies in sight-singing are required, and advanced studies in musical analysis to assist the learning of roles is strongly recommended.

Studies in the physiology of voice production are encouraged.

Coursework and experience that develop understanding and competence in business and professional techniques are strongly recommended.

d. **Final Comprehensive Examinations and Auditions.** A series of comprehensive examinations designated to test professional competence in the common body of knowledge and skills shall be passed as a requirement for graduation.

C. **Doctoral Degrees.** A doctoral degree indicates the completion of professional preparation. The specific methods for achieving this are the prerogative of the institution under the general standards for graduate degrees applied by NASM and NAST.