



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

presents

VOiCE

Vocal Odyssey in Creativity & Education

featuring Special Guests

GeDeane Graham

Bonita Bunt

Jennifer Davis

Christopher Withrow

and MSU Faculty



Friday, February 16 & Saturday, February 17, 2024
Music Building

VOiCE 2024 SCHEDULE

Friday, February 16, 2024

- 1:45 p.m. **Welcome**
(Lecture-Recital Hall, Music Building)
- 2:00 p.m. ***The Ways We Breathe***
(45 minutes) Moderator: Peter Infanger
Panelists: Olivia Boatman, Sheri Falcone, Blake Ryall, and (in absentia) Amy Catron
(Lecture-Recital Hall, Music Building)
- This panel discussion led by Mr. Infanger will focus on the ways different musicians use breath to its greatest advantage. We will hear from singers and instrumentalists and, hopefully, discover some similarities and new ideas concerning the mechanics of and the use of breath in making music.
- 2:45 p.m. **Break (15 minutes)**
- 3:00 p.m. ***When CARO MIO BEN is too hard... What now?***
(45 minutes) Presenter: Jennifer Davis
(Choral Hall, Music Building)
- This Music Education session will focus on good repertoire for the young voice, particularly sixth through twelfth graders. This repertoire can also be used for adult voices who are "new" to art-song singing. Discussion will include understanding the limited ranges of this age and finding repertoire to fit those needs. Techniques will be given on how to incorporate solos into the choral classroom as well.
- 3:45 p.m. **Break (15 minutes)**
- 4:00 p.m. ***Yoga and Singing: Connecting the Breath to the Body***
(45 minutes) Instructor: Cori Reece
(Choral Hall, Music Building)
- Singers will learn mindfulness while singing, as well as breathing techniques that aid the voice in the release of air.
- 4:45 p.m. **Dinner on your own**
- 7:30 p.m. **Guest Artist Recital**
Featuring: GeDeane Graham, mezzo-soprano and Anne Katherine Ragsdale, piano
(Lecture-Recital Hall, Music Building)
- A native of Bay Springs, MS, mezzo-soprano GeDeane Graham is known for her rich low range and refulgent top voice. She has performed roles with Des Moines Metro Opera, Detroit Opera, and the Jakarta Simfonia Orchestra in Indonesia, among others.

Saturday, February 17, 2024

9:00 a.m. ***The Vocal Load: A Performer and Pedagogue's Primer to Planning & Pacing***
(45 minutes) Presenter: Bonita Bunt
(Lecture-Recital Hall, Music Building)

One's vocal load refers to the amount and quality of any and all voice usage. This presentation provides singers and pedagogues with a blueprint to a balanced vocal load through intentional planning of music learning. Three major steps to healthfully planning music learning amidst varied vocal demands are outlined: building familiarity with one's own vocal load, analyzing the musical demands over time, and using awareness of these factors to develop an informed and healthy practice strategy.

9:45 a.m. **Break (15 minutes)**

10:00 a.m. **Master Class**
(75 minutes) Guest Artist: GeDeane Graham
(Lecture-Recital Hall, Music Building)

As a dramatic-yet-lyrical mezzo-soprano, GeDeane Graham has gained attention in several national and international competitions including the George Shirley Vocal Competition, MiOpera Vocal Competition, and D'Angelo Vocal Competition.

11:15 a.m. **Break (15 minutes)**

11:30 a.m. ***A Foiled Recording Experiment: Exploring the origins of recorded sound through the contributions of Édouard-Léon Scott and Thomas Edison***
(45 minutes) Presenter: Christopher Withrow
(Lecture-Recital Hall, Music Building)

When looking at the origins of audio recordings, many sources cite Thomas Edison as being the first to discover the process of recording sound. While Edison himself was pivotal in the popularization of this technological advancement, the title for the first recordings belongs to a Parisian book seller. Come explore the true origins of recorded vocal sounds as we learn about the inventor and his process, and experience the lasting results of his brilliance.

12:15 p.m. **Break (15 minutes)**

12:30 p.m. ***Unleashing the Power of ChatGPT: An Exploration of Its Use, Ethical Considerations, and Impact***
(45 minutes) Presenter: Dana AlZoubi
(Lecture-Recital Hall, Music Building)

In this presentation, we will explore the utilization of ChatGPT, delve into the ethical considerations surrounding its use, analyze its impact on education and society, and offer insights into leveraging its capabilities effectively.

1:15 p.m. **Closing Remarks**
(Lecture-Recital Hall, Music Building)

BIOGRAPHIES



Dr. Jeanette Fontaine (VOiCE director), mezzo-soprano, serves as Associate Professor of Voice, Performance Area Coordinator, and Music Director of Opera at Mississippi State University. Her operatic roles include: Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Principessa in *Suor Angelica*, Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*, Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Nancy in *Albert Herring*, The Announcer in *Gallantry*, Dritte Dame in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Jenny in *Die Dreigroschenoper*. She has appeared as the mezzo-soprano soloist with the Starkville Symphony Orchestra for performances of Bach's *Magnificat*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Coronation Mass*, and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*.

Dr. Fontaine's research interests include the accessibility of Russian diction for undergraduate singers. She has presented lecture recitals on Russian diction with Dr. Roza Tulyaganova at many conferences, most notably in Vienna, Austria and Honolulu, Hawaii. Dr. Fontaine's students have been accepted to graduate voice programs at prestigious conservatories such as Eastman School of Music and Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

A native of California, Dr. Fontaine earned her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Alabama. An advocate for expanding the presence of classical music in the state of Mississippi, Dr. Fontaine has found her calling at Mississippi State University.



Dr. Roza Tulyaganova (VOiCE director), soprano, is a native of Uzbekistan. Since moving to the United States in 2000, she has traveled extensively, performing major and supporting opera roles in cities across the country. Dr. Tulyaganova completed her Master of Music degree at the Manhattan School of Music in 2007 and holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts from Stony Brook University. Before attending the Manhattan School of Music, Dr. Tulyaganova performed roles with many opera companies throughout the East Coast. These include Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* with Mississippi Opera, Musetta in *La Bohème* with Cantiamo Opera Theatre in New York, and Micaëla in *Carmen* with the Brooklyn-Queens Conservatory.

Dr. Tulyaganova has directed multiple operas and operatic scenes. Most recently, she was the Assistant Stage Director to Thaddeus Strassberger at Bard College Summerscape Festival in New York for their production of

Oresteia by Sergey Taneev. Mr. Strassberger also invited her to assist him in Ekaterinburg, Russia for the production of Phillip Glass' *Satyagraha*.

She has taught voice at Stony Brook University in New York; McLennan Community College in Waco, TX; and The Tashkent National Music College in Uzbekistan. Dr. Tulyaganova is currently an Associate Professor of Voice and the Director of Opera at Mississippi State University.



Dr. Dana AlZoubi (presenter) is an assistant clinical professor in the Department of Instructional Systems and Workforce Development. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Technology and Human-Computer Interaction (co-major) from Iowa State University. Her research lies at the intersection of educational technology, learning analytics, and human-computer interaction – three fields that inform her work on employing human-centered approaches to design technology tools to improve teaching and learning processes. Her research interests include instructors’ sensemaking processes of learning analytics dashboards, their reflective practices, and the subsequent pedagogical actions they take accordingly.

Dr. AlZoubi is the current AECT Strohbahn intern and the AECT Design & Development Division’s Board Associate. She has also served in different AERA SIGs and divisions as the AERA Campus Representative for 2020-2022.



Dr. Bonita Bunt (presenter) has worked as soloist, stage director, and stage manager with opera companies, festivals, schools, and workshops. She recently joined the faculty of the University of Mississippi as Director of Opera and Assistant Professor of Music. Favorite roles include the Queen of the Night, Zerbinetta, Tytania, Edith in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Giannetta in *Elixir of Love*. Recent directing credits include *Alcina* and *La serva padrona* at the University of Mississippi, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *A Hand of Bridge*, and *Avow* for the University of Alabama, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Noah’s Flood* for Opera Las Vegas, *A Grand Night for Singing*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*, for Voccalis Repertory, *Beauty and the Beast* for Red River Lyric Opera, and *Hamlet* for UNLV, sung to her own libretto. She holds a doctorate in voice from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, completed a graduate certificate in Vocology, and is a Licensed Body Mapping Educator.



Dr. Olivia Boatman (panelist) is Assistant Professor of Flute at Mississippi State University. She holds a K-12 Mississippi Instrumental Educator License and enjoys serving area high schools through private lessons, master classes, and adjudication. She is a member of the Mississippi Wind Symphony, Starkville Symphony Orchestra, and Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra. She is currently serving on the Flute Clubs Committee for the National Flute Association. Olivia holds a Doctor of Music from Florida State University, a Master of Music from Arkansas State University, and a Bachelor of Music Education from Mississippi State University. Additionally, she has specialized study certificates from Florida State University in Music Education and Leadership as well as College Teaching.



Dr. Amy Catron (panelist) appears regularly as a soloist, chamber, orchestral musician, and clinician in settings throughout the United States, Europe, and China. She is the principal cellist of the Starkville Symphony Orchestra and associate principal cellist with the Illinois Symphony and Chamber Orchestra. Until 2023, she was the principal cellist with Sinfonia da Camera and Millikin-Decatur Symphony. She has appeared as a soloist with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra (Florida), the Illinois Symphony Chamber Orchestra, Sinfonia da Camera, the Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra, the Illini Symphony at the University of

Illinois, Olivet Nazarene Symphony Orchestra, Millikin Wind Ensemble, and with the Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana (BACH). Before moving to the Midwest, she was a member of the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra in Florida. She collaborated with the Akron and Canton Symphonies in Ohio and the Richmond Symphony Orchestra in Virginia.



Jennifer D. Davis (presenter) serves as the Director of Choral Activities for Starkville High School and Music Mentor for Starkville Oktibbeha County School District, Starkville, MS. Previously she has directed the choirs at Meridian (MS) High/Kate Griffin JHS and Crowley (TX) High/HF Stevens Middle. In her 26 years, Mrs. Davis developed the piano lab and AP Theory at MHS and SHS and has worked with all her campuses to develop their music departments, build performances, and compete in their events. Her choirs have frequently earned Sweepstakes and Superiors at festivals, and performed with Carnegie Hall, Festival Disney, Six Flags, and multiple sports venues. Mrs. Davis has a Master and Bachelor of Music in Music Education, both from William Carey University.

Jennifer's husband, Danny, is the Managing Editor for the Office of Thesis and Dissertations for MSU. They enjoy spending time with their adult children, Connor and Anna -usually cheering for the Bulldogs!



Sheri Falcone (panelist) is currently Instructor of Clarinet and Saxophone and the Woodwind and Performance Area Coordinator at Mississippi State University. Her responsibilities include, applied studies in clarinet and saxophone, woodwind methods, chamber music classes and advanced woodwind methods for the Master of Music Education program. In addition to her teaching duties, Ms. Falcone serves as the principal clarinetist with the Starkville/MSU Symphony Orchestra, subs with Orchestras and performs as a soloist. She has performed and presented at the College Music Society, National Association of Wind and Percussion Instructors and the International Double Reed Society at the International, National, Regional, and State levels. Ms. Falcone holds an Associate degree in Applied Science from Onondaga Community College, a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and a Master of Music in Music Education and Clarinet from Syracuse University and has done some additional work toward her doctorate degree.



Mezzo-soprano **GeDeane Graham (performer)** is a native of Bay Springs, MS and is known for her rich low range and refulgent top voice. She is currently under the tutelage of Jane Bunnell at Michigan State University, where she is in her final semester of coursework. The dramatic yet quite lyrical mezzo has gained the attention of several national and international competitions such as, being a finalist and audience favorite the Premiere Opera Foundation International Vocal Competition as well as being a semi-finalist/finalist among several prestigious competitions as in the Detroit Aria Competition, D'Angelo Vocal Competition, and Partners of the Arts to name a few. Graham is a huge advocator and performer of music of the African American Diaspora where she has been recently invited to join the administration board of the George Shirley International Vocal Competition. Along with this advancement, Graham has co-founded a new fresh opera company that has been cultivated in specifically creating opportunities, creative space for musician as well as breaking barriers for those who do not fit into the traditional career track. She made her soloist debut with Artsong Colorado and Chamber Orchestra of the Springs as part of their Voices if the African Diaspora.



Peter Infanger (presenter) is a Lecturer in Voice on the faculty of Mississippi State University where he teaches voice majors, voice minors and those who are designated as non-majors. In addition to his teaching at MSU, Mr. Infanger is the part-time director of music/organist at First United Methodist Church in Starkville as well as the conductor/manager of the Starkville/MSU Symphony Association's Community Chorus. Mr. Infanger holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Vocal Performance from West Virginia Wesleyan College and a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. He has worked with the Mississippi Opera as chorus master, rehearsal accompanist and appeared in numerous very minor parts while "rubbing elbows" with such luminaries as John Alexander, Simon Estes, Carol Vaness. Mr. Infanger and his wife, Lynn, are the proud parents of three adult children and grandparents to Gennady and Frances Clark.



Anne Katherine Ragsdale (collaborative pianist) fell in love with the piano at a very early age. At the age of sixteen, Mrs. Ragsdale began studying piano with Dr. Joel Harrison, a professor at Mississippi State University, who exposed her to many new opportunities. Mrs. Ragsdale received a Bachelor of Music in Education, emphasis in Piano Pedagogy, from Mississippi State University. A very important aspect of her time at MSU was the privilege of studying piano pedagogy under Dr. Jackie Edwards, which greatly influenced her teaching career. Mrs. Ragsdale also attended Florida State University where she received a Master of Music in Performance in Collaborative Piano. While at FSU, she studied with Dr. Carolyn Bridger who stretched and inspired her even further. Since her collegiate days, Mrs. Ragsdale has worked for the Knoxville Opera Company and the University of Tennessee Opera Program as a coach and accompanist. Upon moving back to her home state of Mississippi, she served as an assistant professor of piano at Belhaven University and performed collaboratively with violinist, Xie

Song, in the Jackson metro area. She joined the staff at MSU in the spring of 2019. Mrs. Ragsdale spends much of her time performing with faculty, students and guest artists. She has come full circle in returning to Mississippi State University, her alma mater, which is very dear to her heart.



Cori Reece (presenter), Zwischen, holds a Masters in Voice Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Mobile as well as Bachelor of Arts from Mississippi State University. Her recent singing engagements include The Blessed Mother Immaculata, in the premier of “*Immaculata: The Passion of St. Maximillian Kolbe*,” Juliette in Gounod’s “*Romeo et Juliette*” and Dorabella in Mozart’s “*Così fan Tutte*.” She became 200-hour certified as a yoga instructor in 2021 and teaches yoga at MSU, Elements of Yoga and Bliss Yoga. Cori is particularly interested in how yoga has helped shape her as an artist and human being and how this influences her pedagogical perspective. Her upcoming singing engagements include the soloist in Marten Jansson’s “*Requiem Novum*,” and the soprano soloist in Vivaldi’s Gloria at Mississippi State University.



Dr. Blake Ryall (panelist) joined the music faculty of Mississippi State University in Fall 2020 as Lecturer of Tuba and Euphonium. His current duties include teaching applied tuba and euphonium lessons, conducting the tuba and euphonium ensemble, and performing in the MSU faculty brass quintet. Dr. Ryall received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Arizona State University, the Master of Music degree from East Carolina University, and the Bachelor of Music degree from Appalachian State University. His primary teachers include Dr. Christopher Blaha, Tom McCaslin, and Dr. Deanna Swoboda.



Dr. Christopher Withrow (presenter) has been praised for “bringing masculine gravity both in voice and performance” to the stage. His “powerful stage presence” and “moving performance” has been seen throughout the United States with Opera Fairbanks, Townsend Opera Players, Northstar Opera Company, Modesto Symphony Orchestra, The University of Nevada, Las Vegas Opera Theater, Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra, The University of Alabama Opera Theatre, and other organizations. A native of Redding, California, Mr. Withrow has been seen in the title role in Gianni Schicchi, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Gabriel von Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, and James Agee in the world premiere of Joseph Lander’s *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Concert works to his credit include Johannas Brahm’s *Ein Deutches Requiem*, Ralph Vaughan William’s *Dona Nobis Pacem*, Gabriel Faure’s *Requiem*, W. A. Mozart’s *Vesperae Solennes De Confessore*, J. S. Bach’s *Coffee Cantata*, Leonard Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms*, Felix Mendelssohn’s *Psalm 42*, and Robert Cohen’s

Alzheimer’s Stories. Mr. Withrow holds a Bachelor of Music from California State University, Stanislaus, a Master of Music from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and a Doctor of Musical Arts from The University of Alabama. Mr. Withrow was the 2019 Vann Vocal Institute winner as well as the recipient of a major scholarship from the McConnell Foundation.

SPECIAL THANKS

Danielle Gaudé
Dr. Daniel Stevens
Kelsey Trainer
Jennifer Winter
MSU Choral Faculty
MSU Voice Faculty
Student Assistants

VOiCE: Vocal Odyssey in Creativity & Education
is made possible by

James W. Criss Christianity Trust