



### American Academy of Teachers of Singing

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 National Association of Teachers of Singing

**T**HE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF TEACHERS OF SINGING was founded in 1922 by 15 men, all members of the profession of the teaching of singing. Charter members were Walter L. Bogert, William S. Brady, Dudley Buck, George Fergusson, Yeatman Griffith, George Hamlin, Frederick H. Haywood, Sergei Klibansky, Gardner Lamson, Francis Rogers, Oscar Saenger, Oscar Seagle, George E. Shea, Percy Rector Stephens, and Herbert Witherspoon. Women were admitted to membership in 1983. Admission to membership in the Academy was and remains by invitation only, constitutionally limited to 40 members of the profession of the teaching of singing.

The founders were motivated in the formation of the organization by a desire to make contributions to the improvement of the practice of the profession from the standpoints of both teaching and ethics—such contributions as they individually could not hope to make and such as a large organization might not find practical to undertake. Almost immediately, the Academy initiated a continuing practice of publishing the results of intensive and extensive work by committees whose reports are given critical consideration by the entire membership. On the approval of a majority, these reports are published in the forms of pronouncements, or statements. The first pronouncement of the Academy was the Code of Ethics, which has undergone several revisions since its appearance in 1923.

The Academy has had a long and important relationship with NATS and, in fact, was instrumental in its founding. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the impact of this dynamic organization spread to Chicago and, as a result, the Chicago Council of Teachers of Singing was formed. At the March 4, 1940 meeting of that body, Richard De Young proposed the forming of a national organization of singing teachers, with local chapters throughout the United States. The National Association of Teachers of Singing was founded on March 23, 1944, by the American Academy of Teachers of Singing, together with the New York Singing Teachers Association and the Chicago Singing Teachers Guild. For a number of years, AATS publications appeared in NATS journals, although only sporadically, but, beginning in 2001, the *Journal of Singing* has systematically published Academy statements in a discrete column. Some of these have been particularly relevant reprints of earlier statements, others were updated revisions of previous documents, and still others appeared in these pages for the first time. The publication of statements here does not imply NATS endorsement, nor does their content necessarily reflect the philosophy of NATS or the *Journal of Singing*. Readers are invited to visit the AATS website [[www.americanacademyofteachersofsinging.org](http://www.americanacademyofteachersofsinging.org)].

This statement on choosing a summer program appears here for the first time. It was introduced in a session at the NATS virtual conference, June 2020.

### CHOOSING A SUMMER PROGRAM: GUIDELINES FOR SINGERS

An important part of a singer's formative training can occur during the summer months, stretching from May to early September. Summer programs

usually require a substantial investment of both money and time. The number of summer programs for singers has increased dramatically, both in Europe and in North America, to the extent that it may be difficult to discern the best option for a particular participant.

Given that many of our members have years of experience managing Young Artist Programs and participating as faculty members, we are taking this opportunity to propose a number of appropriate considerations to assist singers, teachers, and families in making an informed decision.

Above all, applicants are urged to choose a program that has a clear mission statement, spells out policies concerning diversity, equity, and inclusivity, and publishes comprehensive information. Those considering any program first should visit the program's website, especially the FAQ section. Following that, contact should be made with the program directly for information not otherwise available. Prospective students should be aware that summer programs are often flexible with regard to the number of students they accept and the faculty they have in residence. Numbers and people may change between the time of application and the time of arrival.

In making a preliminary decision, a number of areas should be considered.

- location
- time frame and length of stay
- age restrictions (if any)
- specific focus of the program: operatic and/or classical song repertoire, music theater, other
- transparency of curricular offerings and daily schedule
- language study
- performance opportunities
- accommodations for persons with disabilities
- flexibility to choose or decline various aspects of the program, such as voice lessons
- faculty, including which faculty are in residence and for how long, as well as student-teacher ratio
- cost
- receipt of credit applicable to a degree program
- opportunities for cultural excursions

The next step is to acquire information concerning the most important aspects of each program.

#### **1. LONGEVITY**

- number of years the program has existed
- testimonials from singers who have participated in the program

#### **2. VOICE FACULTY**

- names, biographies, professional affiliations
- length of time individual teachers will be in residence at the program

#### **3. VOICE RELATED COURSES AND FACULTY**

- body work, such as Yoga, Body Mapping, Feldenkreis, Tai Chi, Alexander Technique, or other disciplines
- stage movement, dance
- acting, scene, and song performance techniques
- theater, voice, and speech

#### **4. NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM**

- levels offered
- number of hours weekly

#### **5. PERFORMANCE**

- repertoire
- recitals, concerts
- venues on and off site
- operatic and/or music theater productions
- scenes programs
- master class participation
- number of singers assigned to one role or scene
- memorization expectations
- timing for receipt of assigned repertoire
- guaranteed public performances for assigned repertoire

#### **6. VOICE LESSONS AND COACHING SESSIONS**

- number of weekly voice lessons and coaching sessions
- pianist for lessons and coaching provided by program or paid for by student
- assignment of voice teacher and vocal coach made by program or requested by student

#### **7. MASTER CLASSES**

- names and biographies of master class presenters
- manner in which singers are chosen for performance

**8. NON-OPERATIC REPERTOIRE**

- additional repertoire a singer may study, that is, song literature, chamber music, contemporary commercial music, music theater, or other areas
- for programs outside North America, the possibility of performing in languages other than that of the host country

**9. HOUSING**

- type of housing offered, such as apartment, dormitory, hotel, host family; choice among single, double, or more room occupancy; private or shared bathroom
- any additional charge for a guest
- availability of kitchen utensils, linens, and other necessities
- proximity to the school or theater
- total cost of housing

**10. TRAVEL**

- group airline ticketing through program or arranged by participant
- ground transportation to and from airport to program location

**11. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

- scholarships or work study availability and application deadlines

**12. FEES AND PAYMENT PLAN**

- extra costs for pianists, books, excursion trips, tickets for performances, and other necessities
- deposit due dates and amount
- circumstances under which the deposit or a portion thereof will be returned
- availability of staggered payment plan
- requirement that all fees must be paid prior to beginning of the program

**13. MEDICAL FACILITIES**

- availability of easily accessible medical facilities
- need for individual medical insurance plan
- regulations of host country regarding health insurance coverage

Additional sources of information for answers to the above include:\*

- YAPTRACKER – an online program listing summer programs, auditions, etc.
- Opera American Singer Training Program, which defines to what level Young Artist Program singers should apply (<https://operaamerica.org/Files/OADocs/ArtistResources/ChoosingYAP.PDF>)
- Additional information for singers (<https://operaamerica.org/content/about/artists.aspx>)
- Musical America 2020 Summer Programs Guide (<https://www.musicalamerica.com/pages/?pagename=camps2020.main&header>)
- Short summaries of strong music theater programs across the U.S. for high school and pre-college students (<https://mac theatre.com/summer-programs>)
- Guide to pre-college oriented programs (<https://majoringinmusic.com/summer-music-camps/>)
- Short list of summer college music theater programs (<https://www.collegemtguide.com/summer-programs>)
- A very positive look at reasons for enrolling in a summer program in music theater (<https://www.schooltheatre.org/blogs/suzanne-livesay/2019/04/19/why-i-didnt-want-my-students-to>)
- Testimonials from and personal conversations with former students and/or current teachers in the program
- *Classical Singer Magazine*

\* These links are provided as a courtesy and are not necessarily endorsed by AATS.

Singers, parents, and teachers considering a summer music program opportunity, with its attendant financial and time commitments, are encouraged to look for a comprehensive, well organized program that responds to questions or concerns in a timely and forthright manner. Such a program may provide a young performer the experience of a lifetime, whether at home or abroad. Finding the optimal situation is well worth the investment of time and effort on the part of all concerned.