VOICE STUDIES AT CARLETON COLLEGE

Whether you are interested in classical songs & arias or contemporary musical theatre, Carleton offers voice students the opportunity to pursue their musical interests at all levels and in a variety of styles. We create an open and safe space for students to explore and we encourage our students to pursue their love and passion for music however they see fit. We encourage conversation with students and other faculty and all are open to exploring their voice.

Features of the Voice Studies Program at Carleton include:
* Weekly Voice Performance Classes, where students can hone their performing skills.
* Opportunities for regular coaching sessions with a professional pianist.
* Themed Showcase Recitals near the end of each term.
Rick Penning, (Senior Lecturer in Voice/Voice Studies Program Coordinator) has earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the School of Music at the University of Minnesota, the Master of Music degree from the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati and the Bachelor of Arts degree from Luther College.

A past 1st Place winner of the Metropolitan Opera District competition, he has performed over 35 operatic roles with opera companies across the United States. Many of those roles were in “world premier productions”, including the role of Bill Watson in MN Opera’s production of the acclaimed Minnesota Opera production of THE SHINING, an operatic retelling of the Stephen King novel.

He has appeared as tenor soloist with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, Minnesota Chorale, Rochester Symphony (Minnesota), Arapahoe Symphony (Colorado) and the Bismarck/Mandan Symphony Orchestra (North Dakota).

Rick Penning is fortunate to have had many wonderful mentors in his life, including current voice teacher David L. Jones (New York City). At the beginning of his operatic career, he was privileged to have enjoyed a long relationship with H. Wesley Balk, considered by many to have revolutionized the way singer-actors are trained.

He maintains a busy voice studio at Carleton College (since 1983!) as well as a studio at Augsburg University and his home studio. His students have won awards and have gone on to studies at the great conservatories and major apprenticeship programs, and they have performed with opera and musical theatre companies and on concert stages around the world.

Teaching Philosophy
Dr. Penning believes in a collaborative approach with the student in developing the voice as a healthy, efficient musical instrument capable of the full gamut of human emotional expression. He finds particular joy in exploring vocal repertoire from a myriad of styles and genres with his students.
Teaching Philosophy

Teaching voice lessons is such a privilege because the human voice is the only instrument we are all born with inextricably linked to our mind, body, and spirit. It is no wonder, then, that singing can be deeply joyful yet nerve-racking, and vulnerable yet profoundly authentic all at the same time. While our background in music may vary as we enter college, we all hold the potential to improve the health and beauty with which we sing. As a voice teacher, I strive to embrace the natural voice you have been given as well as your musical interests. From this launching point, I work to help you improve your technique as a singer, and broaden your exposure to diverse musical styles.
Soprano Melissa Holm-Johansen is a native of Halden, Norway, and is a 1998 graduate of St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, USA, where she graduated cum laude with a double major in vocal performance and music education. Dr. Holm-Johansen holds a D.M.A. in vocal pedagogy and performance from the University of Minnesota and was a two year recipient of a Torske Klubben scholarship.

Her most recent project is a first-of-its-kind all-English recording of songs composed by her countryman Edvard Grieg, in collaboration with pianist Steve Swanson, Norwegian scholar/translator William Halvorson, and the Edvard Grieg Society of Minnesota. The recording is frequently featured on Classical MPR’s “Friday Favorites”.

Dr. Holm-Johansen is often heard premiering and promoting art song in the Twin Cities and is featured regularly as part of the Source Song Festival week.


Dr. Holm-Johansen is a longtime member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) and was previously awarded the NATS Independent Teacher Award.

She has a private voice studio at her home in St. Louis Park, is on the voice faculty at North Central University in Minneapolis and is the Vocal Performance Program Instructor at Shattuck – St. Mary’s Boarding School in Faribault. Dr. Holm-Johansen’s students regularly compete and place at the state, regional and national level and many go on to pursue professional careers in song, theater and opera.

Dr. Holm-Johansen studies with Tony-nominated singer/actor Melissa Hart and University of Minnesota retired professor Jean del Santo.

Dr. Holm-Johansen is an avid golfer, a yogi and a dog lover and together with her partner Doug Rohde, they own Vesla – a 20 month old shepherd/lab/husky rescue from the Red Lake in Northern Minnesota.

**Teaching Philosophy**

My philosophy of voice teaching is based in the holistic notion of vocal pedagogy. I teach extensive anatomy and understanding of the workings of the instrument, but I supplement with imagery, use of gestures, and other means of “tapping into” vocal freedom and release. My deep love of anatomy also stems from my teaching certification as a yoga instructor. Through my yoga training I have been made even more aware of how our body functions, how our muscles work together and what influences our ability to release breath and create freedom in our bodies.

My understanding is also that every individual is unique and that teaching anatomy to one individual doesn’t mean that the same instructional material will resonate with other individuals. I teach by example what has worked for me, for others and sometimes also, what has had scientific merit. Today, teaching voice means “teaching into the future” and teaching students to develop (hopefully) a lifelong love of singing. Singers must be able to utilize their voices in a multi-faceted way; demonstrating legit and classical styles and being able to produce a healthy belt and pop/rock sound. Over the years I have come to grips with the fact that *technique is technique*, however, therefore I always base my most functional and elementary exercises stemming from classical training. My students feel safe in my studio and are always encouraged to explore.
Julia Ennen is a Twin Cities-based actor, singer, and voice teacher. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Minnesota where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music and Race & Ethnic Studies. After completing two years of AmeriCorps service, her journey took her out east where she earned a Master of Music in Music Theatre and Advanced Certificate in Vocal Pedagogy from New York University. Julia is also proudly trained in Meisner Technique. Julia served as an Adjunct Instructor of Voice at NYU and performed frequently in both educational shows and in various NYC workshops, readings, and cabarets. Her performing career focuses mainly in musical theatre, and she has performed on many local stages including History Theatre, Theatre Elision, The Seasons Dinner Theatre, Lakeshore Players Theatre, Stages Theatre Company, Off Broadway Musical Theatre, The Chameleon Theatre Circle, and The Phoenix Theatre. Julia lives in Minneapolis and works actively as an actor and maintains her thriving private voice studio. For a more comprehensive look at her performance activity and teaching philosophy, please see more at www.JuliaEnnen.com.

Teaching Philosophy

"I believe our voices are extensions of ourselves, our personalities, and our hearts. Everyday, the vast majority of us use our voices to communicate, express ourselves, show love to others, and contribute good to the world, whether we are singing or speaking. Such an important instrument, made of living tissue, must be handled with the utmost care. I view my role as a teacher as a true collaborator and caretaker; my students and I work as a team to develop beautiful, sustainable vocal technique that serves overall vocal use and vocal health, musicianship, and storytelling. I teach my students to understand and develop the foundational principles of singing and offer individualized input and practical vocal tools throughout our lessons. I tailor my instruction to uniquely fit each student’s vocal needs and goals so they can find and maintain a balanced, consistent, and healthy sound, in and outside of our sessions. Above all, I teach with joy. We cannot learn and grow without making mistakes along the way, therefore, I prioritize creating a positive and safe environment where students are free to ask questions, explore, and try new things with fearlessness. While I teach across genres, my speciality is musical theatre, including both legit and contemporary mix/belt styles."
**Thomas Bartsch**  
(Voice Studies Program Collaborative Pianist)  
In addition to serving as the collaborative pianist for the voice department at Carleton, Thomas Bartsch is also the staff accompanist at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN and at Augsburg University in Minneapolis. Tom pursues a busy career as a free-lance accompanist/pianist. He is the organist at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Roseville and the Organist/Choir Director at Temple of Aaron Synagogue in St. Paul.

For more information, or if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Rick Penning, Coordinator for the Voice Studies Program at <rpenning@carleton.edu>.  
Please refer to and read carefully the information on the Music Department website for details regarding registration policies and protocols:  
[https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/musc/applied/](https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/musc/applied/)