



# ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL AND SCHOOL

**November 15, 2023**

**TO:** Aspen Opera Theater and VocalARTS (AOTVA) Singers, Pianists, Staff and Faculty  
**FROM:** Company Management

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2024 Aspen Opera Theater and VocalARTS program for the 75th season of the Aspen Music Festival and School! We are thrilled for you to join us this summer in Aspen for a season packed full of exciting performances and world-class artistry. What follows are answers to frequently asked questions and other useful information as you prepare for a summer in Aspen.

## WELCOME FROM OUR CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Congratulations, and a warm welcome to Aspen Opera Theater and VocalARTS! As you will see in the following pages, there is so much in store for you, including, we hope, personal and professional growth.

Next summer, we will help you hone skills to become a more well-rounded performer. But we also want you to unplug, limit your news feed, and take a deep dive in the clear mountain air. Walk, bike, hike. Take time to ponder the beauty and timelessness of the mountains. Let your inspiration be the Aspen trees themselves: did you know that Aspen forests are not multiple individual trees, but rather *one* organism with a single root system? There is no greater metaphor for the beginning of this journey.

We can't wait to see you and make music with you. Hydrate!

Renée and Patrick

## AOTVA FACULTY & STAFF

### Co-Artistic Directors

Renée Fleming  
Patrick Summers

### Senior Musical Staff

Myra Huang, *Director of Musical Administration and Head Coach*  
William Billingham, *Senior Coach*  
Kirill Kuzmin, *Senior Coach*  
Grant Loehnig, *Senior Coach*  
Kenneth Merrill, *Senior Coach*  
Nicolò Sbuelz, *Senior Coach*  
Madeline Slettedahl, *Senior Coach*  
Pierre Vallet, *Senior Coach*  
Rachelle Fleming, *Music Theater Instructor*  
Chia Patiño, *Scenes Director*

### Voice Faculty

Stephen King, *Voice Instructor*  
Carol Vaness, *Voice Instructor*



### INTRODUCTORY AUDITIONS

Upon arrival in Aspen, all AOTVA artists are required to perform an introductory audition for the artist-faculty and co-artistic directors. This audition will allow them to hear you in a large hall setting and cast any remaining performance opportunities. Dates and times will be sent to you later in the spring, and you will sign up for your audition time through your AMFS Student Portal.

**Dates and Times:** TBD

**Location:** Harris Concert Hall

**Repertoire:** Two arias and one art song of your choice in at least two languages. Please also offer a monologue or music theater selection of your choice. Monologues should be no more than 2 minutes in length.

### MAINSTAGE OPERA PRODUCTIONS

This year's productions are Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* and Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. *Hänsel und Gretel* will be performed on the stage of the Benedict Music Tent and *Le Nozze di Figaro* in the historic Wheeler Opera House. AOTVA singers are expected to appear in at least one mainstage production, either singing/covering roles or participating in the ensemble/chorus. As needed, Studio Artists will also perform in the AMFS Chorus. Cuts, complete cast lists, chorus assignments, rehearsal schedules, and score information will be provided in April.

### MATTHEW AUCOIN AND PETER SELLARS'S MUSIC FOR NEW BODIES

The AMFS is proud to present composer Matthew Aucoin and director Peter Sellars's exciting new collaboration *Music for New Bodies*, which will have its world premiere in Houston in April. The piece is inspired by the poetry of Jorie Graham and the ideas of environmentalist Rachel Carson. Five AOTVA singers will be cast in a concert version of this major new work, to be performed at the Wheeler Opera House on July 1.

### OPERA ENCOUNTERS and VocalARTS SHOWCASE RECITALS

Every Saturday from 10 am-12 pm, AOTVA singers will perform on the mainstage of the Wheeler Opera House in either the Opera Encounters, VocalARTS Showcase, or Composer Collaboration Project Recitals. This is a required weekly event for everyone in the company and will be followed by a brief company meeting.

Opera Encounters programs are prepared in the weeks prior to performance, then workshopped in front of an audience. Each program will have a theme and host, in addition to artist-faculty who will help prepare the performance. Assignments are determined based on your Singer Repertoire List (submitted via your AMFS Student Portal). Each scene will receive 2-3 musical coachings and 1-3 staging rehearsals. Programs without fully staged scenes will require fewer rehearsals. There will be a dress rehearsal in the Wheeler Opera House prior to each program. AOTVA librarians will provide digital scores for every scene.

AOTVA singers will collaborate with AMFS collaborative pianists to present VocalARTS Showcase Recitals. Music is prepared and rehearsed in the weeks prior to each performance. Each program will focus on art song. Assignments for VocalARTS Showcase Recitals are determined based on your Singer Repertoire List (submitted via your AMFS Student portal). Each group assigned to perform will receive 3-4 musical and dramatic coachings in the weeks leading up to each recital. There will be a dress rehearsal in the Wheeler Opera House prior to each program.



### COMPOSER COLLABORATION PROJECT

This project is an exciting opportunity for AOTVA singers to collaborate with AMFS composer fellows to create a dramatic duet scene, song, or short song cycle. It will allow you to explore the process of composing vocal music and leave Aspen with a piece custom written for your voice. Every group will coach with Renée Fleming, Patrick Summers, Christopher Theofanidis, and AOTVA's senior coaching staff. Singers will be assigned to this project based on workload, assignments, and schedules. Assigned singers and participating composers will attend a kick-off Zoom meeting with the program directors pre-season. Groups will be responsible for meeting all project deadlines and participating in coachings and the culminating performance at Opera Encounters on August 17.

### PLENARY SESSIONS

These panel discussions and classes with professional artists will highlight important topics on the business of music. Singers and coaches will also have the opportunity to perform for industry professionals. In 2023, guest artists included Ana María Martínez, Sasha Cooke, Rodrick Dixon, Kelly O'Connor, and Matthew Aucoin.

### OTHER PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

AOTVA singers perform on a variety of programs, including Chamber Music concerts, House Music concerts, the Season Benefit, Spotlight Recitals, and other concerts throughout the summer.

Some of these opportunities will be cast according to your Singer Repertoire Form (submitted via your AMFS Student Portal), while others will be determined after artist-faculty hear your introductory audition upon arrival in Aspen. It is important to us that every singer, regardless of educational level or casting in our mainstage operatic productions, receives a satisfactory number of performance opportunities in Aspen. If you are hungry for more, you can request to perform on weekly Spotlight Recitals.

### CLASSES

AOTVA singers are strongly encouraged to attend weekly yoga and acting classes. Ms. Fleming and Maestro Summers are adamant that everyone spends time focusing on their mind-body connection while in Aspen. AMFS will bring in trained local professionals to guide your bodywork, but there is so much you can do in Aspen to heighten this experience. Find a hiking buddy, bike to and from campus, or try river rafting on your dark days!

### VOICE LESSONS

Studio Artists will receive 60 minutes of vocal instruction weekly from an AMFS artist-faculty member. Fleming Artists will receive 45 minutes of vocal instruction weekly with Ms. Fleming when she is in residence, and 45-minutes weekly with their primary teacher. Fleming Artists may opt out of one of these 45-minute sessions, if desired. Outside of Ms. Fleming's residency, Fleming Artists will receive 60-minute lessons with their primary artist-faculty member.

### DAILY & WEEKLY SCHEDULES

A weekly schedule will be distributed every Saturday, followed by daily schedules each evening. It is imperative that you review the entire schedule for the week. While most classes, lessons, and coachings happen on the Bucksbaum Campus, AOTVA often utilizes the Meadows Campus (Harris Concert Hall and Benedict Music Tent) and the Wheeler Opera House. It is crucial that you plan to include travel time and meals. Maps will be available at the Office of Student Services.



Additionally, upon arrival you will receive a personal iCal feed, which can automatically upload your individual schedule directly from our scheduling system (ArtsVision) to your smartphone.

### COMPANY DARK DAYS

Every week, there will be a company-wide dark day. With a few exceptions, we will do our best to ensure you are not scheduled for regular activities on this day. Rest, relaxation, and outdoor time are essential in Aspen.

### TICKET POLICY

AOTVA students may obtain one ticket to each opera and all other events, except benefits, special events, and collaborations, per the regular [student policy](#). For up to a total of two complimentary tickets for the season for visiting family or significant others to regular events, please submit the complimentary ticket request form, which will be made available on the AMFS Student Portal, no later than 10 am on the day of the event.

In addition, participants in the individual operas are allowed one or two passes to admit their guests to the final dress rehearsal. This is a request within AOTVA, and not regulated through the box office. Please contact the AOTVA Company Manager with these requests.

Opera Encounters programs are ticketed events and AOTVA students are required to attend. Seats in the Wheeler balcony will be blocked off, and students may show their student ID to Front of House staff to sit in their designated section.

Please remember that at all times you are representatives of the AMFS and should conduct yourself accordingly. This includes being mindful of attire, electronic device usage, language used, and overall professional demeanor.

### WHAT TO PACK

Please review the [Student Handbook](#) page for AMFS policies, what to bring to Aspen, housing, transportation, and other important details.

Aspen is an expensive resort town; stores in Aspen are high-end (Prada, Gucci, etc.), so we recommend packing thoughtfully for the summer. There is a Walmart and a Target in Glenwood Springs, a town about 41 miles away from Aspen. Keep in mind the following suggestions:

- Upon arrival, drink plenty of water. Aspen is at an elevation of nearly 8,000 feet and the climate is dry, so it will take a few days for you to acclimate.
- Consider a humidifier and/or air purifier for your room. Summers in the high mountains are especially dry, and a purifier will help mitigate the effects of any nearby fires.
- Bring appropriate clothing for fluctuating temperatures and weather conditions. Afternoon rain showers are common in summer, temperatures can swing drastically overnight, and snow in June is unlikely but not unheard-of.

### QUESTIONS?

Contact the Office of Student Services at [studentservices@aspenmusic.org](mailto:studentservices@aspenmusic.org) or 970-205-5050. As the summer approaches, department specific contact information can be found in the [All-School Directory](#).