

# 2025 Collaborative Piano Program Manual

Information subject to change | Updated as of 6/13/2025

The Collaborative Piano program provides training for exceptional pianists who are already committed to collaborative arts or are considering a career in this area. Solo pianists who are exploring studies and work in this field are encouraged to consider the program, as it is an excellent introduction to various facets of the collaborative arts. The term “collaborative arts” includes any area of piano performance that involves more than solo piano (i.e., piano-vocal duo, piano-instrumental duo, orchestral piano, piano chamber music, opera coaching, choral accompanying, etc.). The program combines practical experience with theoretical study and covers a wide range of the keyboard collaborative arts.

Depending on each pianist's interests, students may participate in orchestral performance under resident and visiting guest conductors, instrumental collaborations (studio accompanying, duo performances in various venues, chamber music), vocal collaborations (art song performances, vocal chamber music, studio accompanying, opera), and contemporary works with various ensembles.

The Collaborative Piano Program includes weekly individual coachings, studio classes, and seminars with artist-faculty from the Aspen Music Festival and School and visiting guest artists. Seminar subjects may cover a wide range of vocal and instrumental repertoire, including special topics in song literature, composer-focused workshops, playing orchestral reductions, conducting, and other areas related to the collaborative artist's work.

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## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

All AMFS participants must adhere to the expectations outlined in the [Student Handbook](#).

### Collaborative Piano Kick-Off Meeting (Required)

Meet with your student-colleagues and the collaborative piano artist-faculty to learn all about program expectations and opportunities available to Collaborative Piano students.

- **Monday, June 30**, 6pm in Castle Creek 01 (first Studio Class)

### Primary Projects and Expectations

Primary projects for **Vocal Collaboration** Fellows will focus on art song study and public performances. The majority of projects for **Opera Coaching** Fellows will prioritize opera. However, the lines between these programs are not rigid, so that all pianists will have a range of opportunities and experiences (opera, song, cabaret, new music, etc.) based on individual interests, abilities, and scheduling. Through these various projects, pianists will have opportunities for coaching/instruction with AMFS artist-faculty Myra Huang, Cameron Stowe, Patrick Summers, and Kenneth Merrill, among others. Weekly activities for all Vocal Collaboration and Opera Coaching Fellows will include assignments for studio accompanying (approximately 6 hours on average per week), allowing pianists to observe and benefit from the teaching of AMFS's voice artist-faculty members. Each year, the program may offer a range of additional projects, including choral accompanying, supporting voice performance classes, and assignments to both instrumental and vocal repertoire, providing pianists with a well-rounded experience.

**Instrumental Collaboration** Fellows will participate in duo sonata concerts and may apply to participate in Aspen Chamber Music, in addition to accompanying the annual AMFS concerto competitions and weekly studio accompanying. Through these projects, pianists will have

coachings with Cameron Stowe, Anton Nel, and various members of the AMFS instrumental artist-faculty and Collaborative Coaches.

**Orchestral Collaboration** Fellows will have weekly opportunities to perform with the AMFS orchestras, working under resident and visiting guest conductors. Participation in other activities listed above (for Vocal Collaboration Fellows and Instrumental Collaboration Fellows) will be assigned according to individual interests and schedules.

**All accompanying hours are a part of the core curriculum for the Collaborative Piano program.**

## CLASSES

Visit the Class and Non-Orchestral Performance Schedule (to be available electronically through the [AMFS Student Portal](#)) for a complete listing of classes, locations, and dates. Be sure to check this schedule regularly, as it will continue to be updated throughout the summer season.

### Collaborative Piano Studio Class

All collaborative piano fellows attend and perform in a weekly collaborative piano studio class. Those interested in performing should communicate with their teacher.

- **Mondays from 6-8 pm** in Castle Creek 01

### Collaborative Piano Seminar

Collaborative piano seminar classes will cover a range of topics related to the career and work of collaborative pianists.

- **Sunday, July 20 from 10:30 am-12:30 pm** in Castle Creek 01
- **Sunday, August 17 from 10:30 am-12:30 pm** in Castle Creek 01

### Opera Conducting Workshop

This conducting-specific workshop will be led by Patrick Summers and Cameron Stowe. This class is required for collaborative pianists with vocal and opera coaching concentration and optional for instrumental concentration.

- **Wednesday, July 2 from 9-10:30 am** in Castle Creek 01
- **Wednesday, August 6 from 9-10:30 am** in Scanlan Hall

### Weekly Song Workshop

AOTVA vocalists and collaborative pianists will be given the opportunity to perform the art songs they have prepared for that week's art song performance, and workshop their pieces with Cameron Stowe, Director of the AMFS Collaborative Piano program, as well as other participating AOTVA artist-faculty. Student attendance is highly encouraged for those not performing art song that week, giving the two departments the chance to come together weekly.

- **Wednesdays 10:30-11:30am** Weeks 1 and 3-7

- **Tuesdays 10:30-11:30am** Weeks 2 and 8

### Yoga for Artists

This class is open to all Collaborative Piano and Aspen Opera Theater and VocalARTS singers and will be focused on best supporting the students' artistry and experience at AMFS. It will blend a range of active yoga poses (asanas), breathwork (pranayama), meditation, Pilates, savasana, and more. Students will practice outdoors on the turf alongside the foxes and mountains, which adds a depth of peacefulness. Former participants name the stress-relieving aspects of practice, time spent focused on centering, and joy as some of the greatest benefits. AMFS supplies mats and all needed props.

- Yoga classes take place once a week on **Wednesday mornings** Weeks 1 and 3 through 7, and **Tuesday mornings** Weeks 2 and 8 from 9-10:15 am on the Turf field outside of Hurst Hall

## PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

### Sonata Showcases

The Collaborative Piano program will offer three Sonata Showcases for instrumental ensembles. AMFS artist-faculty will pair students for these recitals. Performances take place in Edlis Neeson Hall on the Bucksbaum Campus, with a Dress Rehearsal the day before.

- **Saturday, July 19**, 6:30 pm (Dress Rehearsal July 18, 7-9pm)
- **Saturday, August 2**, 6:30 pm (Dress Rehearsal August 1, 7-9pm)
- **Saturday, August 16**, 6:30 pm (Dress Rehearsal August 15, 7-9pm)

### Art Song Showcases

The Collaborative Piano program will offer a variety of performance opportunities to showcase art song in collaboration with Aspen Opera Theater and VocalARTS vocalists. Artist-faculty will pair students for these recitals and provide performance coachings. Performances take place at the Aspen Chapel.

- **Sunday, July 20**, 7pm
- **Sunday, August 3**, 7pm
- **Sunday, August 17**, 7pm

### Opera Encounters

Every Saturday from 10 am-12 pm, Collaborative Pianists with an emphasis in Vocal Collaboration or Opera Coaching will collaborate with AOTVA singers to perform on the mainstage of the Wheeler Opera House in the Opera Encounters series. These programs will feature opera scenes, arias, art song, or pieces written in collaboration with the students of the Susan Schumann Center for Composition Studies and 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. Coaches for the 2025 season include Kirill Kuzmin, Ken Merrill, and Madeline Slettedahl.
- Assignments are communicated by the AOTVA Company Manager.

- Each group assigned to perform will receive 3-4 musical and dramatic coachings in the weeks leading up to the recital.
- **Opera Coaches** will be assigned to perform in two Opera Encounters workshops with Aspen Conducting Academy conductors, offering pianists the opportunity to arrange two piano reductions for works being performed. Assignments will be communicated by the AOTVA Company Manager, and pianists will have the opportunity to meet with Patrick Summers and Myra Huang to review arrangements.
- A dedicated Art Song program takes place **July 12**.

### Harris Concert Hall Master Classes

Collaborative Pianists with an emphasis in Instrumental Collaboration or Orchestral Piano may have the opportunity to perform with their collaborator for renowned guest-artists in the weekly 1 pm Harris Concert Hall Master Class.

- Teacher approval is required for performance.
- The guest Teaching-Artist will select the performers.
- The Office of Student Services will facilitate the application, teacher-approval, and selection process.

### String Showcase

Collaborative Pianists with an emphasis in Instrumental Collaboration or Orchestral Piano may have the opportunity to perform with their collaborator in a String Showcase Recital, which are held weekly on the Bucksbaum Campus. Outstanding players will be nominated by members of the AMFS artist-faculty to perform at this recital series.

### Aspen Chamber Music

In April, interested students may apply to be placed in chamber music through their AMFS Student Portal. Chamber Music applications were due by **May 1** for placement consideration. While students in the Orchestra/Instrumental, Solo Piano, and Collaborative Piano programs may apply for placement in an ensemble, it's important to note that not everyone will be placed in a chamber music group due to the availability of faculty coaches. Placement in an ensemble is not guaranteed. Students who choose to form their own groups are welcome to rehearse at their leisure but will not be assigned coaches and/or performance opportunities. Visit the [Chamber Music](#) page on the AMFS website for more information and commitment expectations.

### Spotlight Recitals

Spotlight Recitals are a setting for students who wish to perform chamber and solo works. Solo and chamber works are encouraged and most appropriate. Concertos are accepted on a case-by-case basis. Students who are placed in chamber music will receive a preassigned performance date on this series. Those preparing solo projects or ad hoc chamber music projects may apply for a performance date by submitting a Spotlight Recital Application through their AMFS Student Portal. All applications will be sent to Aspen teachers for approval. Opportunities fill quickly in late summer so make sure to arrive at Aspen prepared to apply early. Students may apply multiple

times, but priority will be given to those who have not yet performed on the series. See the application form for specific deadlines and recital dates, but the general Spotlight Recital schedule is below:

Harris Concert Hall: Wednesdays and Thursdays

- Dress Rehearsal: 1-2:30 pm, Performance: 3 pm

Aspen Chapel: Thursdays

- Dress Rehearsal: 3:30-4:30 pm, Performance: 5 pm

Aspen Community Church: Saturdays

- Dress Rehearsal: 12-1 pm, Performance: 1:30 pm

Pitkin County Library: Mondays and Fridays

- Dress Rehearsal: 1-2 pm, Performance 2:30 pm

### Concerto Competition

In addition to accompanying assignments, Collaborative Piano students can compete for the chance to perform as soloist with the Aspen Conducting Academy Orchestra in the Klein Music Tent. Competition pieces, concert dates, deadlines, and participation rules will be available on the AMFS Student Portal. Application forms are due by the published date and must be submitted through the AMFS Student Portal. Applications will be sent to Aspen teachers for approval.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND SCHEDULING

### Collaborative Program Administrator

The Collaborative Piano program has a dedicated administrator who will facilitate the scheduling of weekly Instrumental and Orchestral Collaboration assignments (including instrumental studio hours, performance collaborations, and concerto competition pairing).

- Eliza Ching, Collaborative Piano Program Coordinator and Collaborative Pianist / Coach, [collaborativepiano@aspenmusic.org](mailto:collaborativepiano@aspenmusic.org)

### Aspen Opera Theater and VocalARTS Company Manager

The Aspen Opera Theater and VocalARTS program has a dedicated administrator who will facilitate the scheduling of weekly accompanying and other assignments between Opera Coaching fellows, Vocal Collaboration fellows, and AOTVA singers.

- Elliott Paige, AOTVA Company Manager, [epaige@aspenmusic.org](mailto:epaige@aspenmusic.org)