



NYSTA – PDP

Comparative Pedagogy 2008

Faculty Biographies

Listed in order of appearance during the course



Marvin Keenze, baritone, is professor of voice and pedagogy at the Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton where he has been a member of the voice faculty since 1976. He has taught at the University of Delaware, Swarthmore College and for Boston University's Young Artists Program at Tanglewood. He is the founder and director of THE VOICE RESOURCE CENTER and coordinator of the annual MASTER TEACHERS AND SINGERS WEEK at Westminster. He is the Coordinator of International Activities for NATS and an advisor to the International Congress of Voice Teachers. He was chair of the second International Congress and of the 2000 NATS Philadelphia convention. As a teacher, singer, pianist, conductor and adjudicator he has traveled to 42 countries around the world, most recently to Finland, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Italy, Hungary and Brazil. He has adjudicated the Metropolitan Opera Auditions on the regional and district levels, the Australian Opera Competitions, the NATSAA regional and national competitions., the Nova Scotia Kiwanis Festival and the Dunedin, New Zealand Voice Competitions. He has presented classes for the Voice Foundation's SYMPOSIUM ON THE CARE OF THE PROFESSIONAL VOICE and for NATS workshops and conventions. In 1997 he was the recipient of the Van Lawrence Award for his work in voice pedagogy and teaching. He is a member of the National Opera Association and the American Academy of Teachers of Singing. He maintains a private voice studio in Philadelphia where he lives.



Emerging from a classical background into the New York City contemporary music scene as performer then teacher, **Melissa Cross** evolved a unique method of vocal training that culminated in the critically acclaimed release of the vocal instructional DVD, "The Zen of Screaming" (2005).

Melissa's unique approach combines a knowledge of physiology, acoustics and neuroscience in a visual language that is functional and easily understood. The method teaches dynamic registration with coordinated breath pressure in a way that allows the performer to be spontaneous with more control, endurance and confidence. Testimonials from the countless well-known performers that are her students attest to the fact that the traditional basics of vocal technique can be applied to even the most unorthodox of musical genres. The "Zen of Screaming 2" DVD (2007)) further explores more specific usage of the technique as it applies to extreme heavy metal rock vocals.

Both DVD's contain detailed and graphic medical footage showing the innermost workings of the voice and highlights how physical mechanics can be combined with appropriate imagery to strengthen delivery and avoid vocal damage.

Melissa is a graduate of The Interlochen Arts Academy and The Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in the United Kingdom. She has been teaching in New York City for 17 years. "The Zen of Screaming" and "The Zen of Screaming 2" are distributed by Alfred Music Publishing and are also available at www.melissacross.com.



Scott McCoy is Professor of Voice and Pedagogy, Director of the Presser Music Center Voice Laboratory, and Director of Graduate Studies at Westminster Choir College of Rider University. His multimedia voice science and pedagogy textbook, *Your Voice: An Inside View* (2004) is used extensively by colleges and universities throughout the nation and abroad. Deeply committed to education, McCoy is a founding faculty member in the New York Singing

Teachers Association (NYSTA) professional development program, teaching classes in voice anatomy, physiology, and acoustic analysis.

McCoy maintains an active singing career. To date, he has performed more than two dozen leading operatic roles and over sixty concert and oratorio solo roles with professional music organizations in the United States and abroad. In addition, he is a specialist in the song cycles of Schubert and Schumann, frequently concertizing with pianists Claude Cymerman and J.J. Penna.

A long-time member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), McCoy currently serves the organization as National President-Elect, Associate Editor for Voice Pedagogy of the *Journal of Singing*, as Chairman of the Voice Science Advisory Committee, and was a Master Teacher for the 2005 NATS Intern Program. He was elected to membership in the distinguished American Academy of Teachers of Singing in 2003. Prior to joining the Westminster faculty, he was chair of Voice and Opera at the University of Iowa. When not teaching, singing or writing, he might be found bicycling or working on his 1952 MG-TD roadster.



Bruce Kolb, D.M.A., is a highly regarded, internationally distinguished singing/acting teacher and clinician as well as a voice consultant and media coach for the major national and international television networks. Based in New York City, he has also performed extensively in opera, oratorio, music theater, early music, and concert in New York City, Boston, Washington, D.C., nationally, and in Europe, Bermuda and Central and South America. Students from his studios have received critical acclaim in opera and musical theater in Europe and in the United States, including the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, major American and European opera companies, and hundreds of leading Broadway and Off-

Broadway productions. His students are also professional singers in oratorio, concert, and early music ensembles, as well as first place winners and finalists in major national and international competitions. On Broadway, his students have excelled in original leading roles and are winners of the Tony, Olivier, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Awards.

Bruce completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in vocal performance at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, and he has held faculty posts in voice and choral conducting at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ, Boston Conservatory of Music, Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, and Central College in Pella, Iowa. Also known as a writer, conductor, producer, and composer, his scores of incidental music and songs for "Much Ado About Nothing," "As You Like It," and "The Winters Tale" were premiered in New York City with the American Globe Theater where he regularly performed as an actor and singer in addition to serving as music director and composer for the company.

As a clinician, he regularly teaches master classes at a number of universities, theater companies, and NATS and NYSTA workshops on such topics as "Singing Technique for the Musical Theater," "Technical Issues in Cultivated and Vernacular Singing Styles," "Musical-Dramatic Preparation for the Singer-Actor," "Working Practically with Performance Anxiety," "Balancing Singing Technique with Authentic Acting in Opera," and "The Mandorla Metaphor in Preparation and Performance." In March, 2001, he was invited to teach in Vienna, Austria, at the historic Theater an der Wien, where he taught private lessons to the cast of Mozart. He has also taught in England, Germany, and Switzerland and is a National Panelist and Teacher for the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts in Miami, Florida.

Bruce's extensive study of singing, acting, Shakespeare, movement, vocal pedagogy, voice therapy, physiology, conducting, psychology, performance anxiety, archetypes, and Jungian studies contributes to his unique ability to synthesize the various components that merge in performance, whether it be stage, film, TV, or concert hall.



Charlotte Surkin is a singing voice specialist who has been teaching students with vision loss at The Filomen M. D'Agostino Greenberg Music School at Lighthouse International for over 20 years. She has successfully completed vocology internships at the Grabscheid Voice Center at Mt. Sinai Hospital and the Vox Humana Laboratory at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital, both in

New York City. Formerly, a board member of NYSTA, she was in the first graduating class of the Core of Knowledge Program. Ms. Surkin has performed over 30 oratorios in the Tri-State area including the alto solos in the Messiah at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Ms. Surkin has a Bachelor of Music Education from Temple University; an MA in music from New York University and a Certificate in Opera from the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. In addition to Chairing the Voice Department at Lighthouse International Music School, Ms. Surkin is an Assistant Adjunct Professor at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey and a voice instructor at New York University's CAP21 Musical Theater Department.



Peter Ludwig has sung principal roles with Encompass Theater, Vineyard Theater, Pensacola Opera, Chattanooga Opera, Stonington (ME) Opera Arts, Rockland Opera, Vertical Player Repertory, et al. He has been soloist in concerts and recitals at Carnegie Hall, Weill Hall, the 92nd Street Y, the Austrian Cultural Forum, the Actors' Studio, and other venues in the U.S., Italy, and Switzerland. He was soloist in nine World or U. S. Premieres, of works by historical and living composers.

He maintains his own studio in New York (www.ludwigsinging.com). He taught at the 92nd Street Y, and at La Guardia HS of the Arts, where he directed the Opera Workshop; many of his students have gone on to leading conservatories, and to distinguished performing careers.

Mr. Ludwig is a graduate of the Juilliard School and NYU, and was a finalist in the CCO Competition. He is Treasurer of the New York Singing Teachers' Association.



Maria Argyros has performed over twenty operatic roles such as Mimi in La Boheme, Gilda in Rigoletto, Pamina and The First Lady in The Magic Flute, Adina in The Elixir of Love, Micaela in Carmen, Servilia in La Clemenza di Tito, Nanetta in Falstaff, and the title roles in Massenet's Manon, Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, and Lully's Alceste.

Miss Argyros has performed as soloist with The Little Orchestra Society, South Florida Symphony, Albany Pops Orchestra, Chappaqua Orchestral Assoc., Greater Utica Opera Guild, Schenectady Light Opera Company, Saratoga Friends of Musical Arts, Capital Hill Orchestra and Choral Society, Boston Chorus Pro Musica, Liederkrantz Society, American Chamber Orchestra of NJ, and Northeast Harbor Choral Society. Miss Argyros spent two summers at the Tanglewood Music Center where she studied with Phyllis Curtin and performed in recitals.

Besides earning a Bachelors degree from the Crane School of Music, SUNY, Potsdam, and a Masters degree from Emerson College in Boston, Miss Argyros as also earned post-graduate credits from Peabody Conservatory, NYU, and Illinois State University. She has studied vocal pedagogy with Dr. Scott McCoy and Dr. Thomas Cleveland at Westminster Choir College. Continuing her work in vocal pedagogy, Miss Argyros studied with David Blair McClosky, a recognized authority and pioneer in the field of voice science, and completed 120 hours of course work to become a Certified McClosky Voice Technician. As part of the teaching staff of the McClosky Institute of Voice, she teaches summer seminars offered nationwide by the Institute, and most recently, vocal anatomy and physiology to voice professionals. She has been a referral voice teacher for the Grabscheid Voice Center at Mt. Sinai Hospital, and she regularly teaches "Techniques for Healthy Voice Use" workshops, most recently for the New York City Board of Education. Maria serves on the Board of Directors of NYSTA, and completed the "Distinguished Voice Professional" courses offered by NYSTA.

An experienced voice teacher since 1983, Maria's students have sung with Sarasota Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Opera on the Heights, Bronx Opera, and in Kennedy Center. She is chair of the voice department of the Turtle Bay Music School in Manhattan, and is an adjunct associate professor of voice at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College, where she teaches applied voice, group voice classes, and the vocal pedagogy course to graduate students.



Ira Siff is a native New Yorker, who grew up on the standing room line of the old Metropolitan Opera, worshipping the famous singers of the 60's. A graduate of the Cooper Union, with a degree in Fine Arts, Mr. Siff began to study voice, and made his debut as a tenor in 1970. For the next decade, he performed roles in opera, operetta and musicals in the New York, at The New York Shakespeare Festival, Circle in the Square, Playwrights Horizons, and many other venues. Turning to cabaret, Ira created an act using vocal parody of opera, jazz, and other styles of music, gaining critical acclaim, and a loyal following. In 1981, he founded La Gran Scena Opera Co. di New York, the internationally acclaimed travesty troupe, whose gifted falsetto "divas" have spoofed opera with great affection for over two decades, in New York annually, and on tours to some of the great festivals, theatres and opera houses of the world, including Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, The Edinburgh Festival, the opera houses of Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Caracas, Wiesbaden, Berlin, the Munich Festival, Heidelberg Castle Festival, Venice Festival, Wexford Festival Opera and Belfast Festival (Ireland), Covent Garden Festival, Bloomsbury Theatre (London), Barcelona Olympics Festival of the Arts, Madrid's Autumn Festival, Uruguay's Hotel Conrad Theatre (performing the show in Castillian in all three), five extensive tours to The Netherlands, and countless others. Their DVD, *La Gran Scena Live in Munich* is a favorite party tape for opera lovers. As Madame Vera, prima "donna" of La Gran Scena, Mr. Siff has appeared as a soloist in parodies of "diva farewell recitals", called *The Annual Farewell*, all over the world, and had guested with serious opera companies, as well as appearing on Public Radio for two years in New York City. Madame Vera's DVD, *The Annual Farewell Recital*, received rave reviews when it was released by VAI in 2004, and has become a sought-after item in the U.S., U.K., and Europe. He is pleased and proud that Gran Scena is a favorite of many opera world luminaries, including James Levine, Leontyne Price, Joan Sutherland, Renata Scotto, Sherrill Milnes, Aprile Millo, Anna Moffo and any others. For the past thirty years, Mr. Siff has been a voice teacher and interpretive coach, teaching in New York, Italy, Israel, Holland and China, giving Master Classes for the Met Opera Guild, and is on the faculty of the Renata Scotto Vocal Academy. In 2000, he turned to stage directing, gaining critical acclaim for his production of *Tosca*, starring Aprile Millo, and his semi-staged *Les Huguenots* at Carnegie Hall, starring Marcello Giordani. He then went to Copengagen to stage Offenbach's *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*. Following *Madama Butterfly* in Lima, Mr. Siff donned his diva outfit for Gran Scena's 20TH Anniversary Season in New York, then traveled to Boston to direct an award winning production of *The Mikado*, then back to New York for another *Butterfly*, to Sarasota Opera to direct a critically acclaimed *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He returned to Carnegie Hall in March 2002 for *Adriana Lecouvreur*, starring Miss Millo, Dolora Zajick and Marcello Giordani, and Lima for *Il trovatore*. After a highly successful Canterbury Opera, New Zealand *Così fan tutte*, conducted by Richard Bonyngue, Ira took La Gran Scena for farewell performances in the Liceu Opera House in Barcelona, and staged *Cavalleria Rusticana and Pagliacci* for New Jersey State Opera, and *Die Fledermaus* for Utah Symphony and Opera. He returned to New Zealand for *La Traviata*, for which he also designed the costumes, to Sarasota to direct *Werther*, and Carnegie Hall to semi-stage *La Gioconda* for Aprile Millo. 2004/5 brought critically acclaimed work on *La fanciulla del west* with Miss Millo for Opera Orchestra of N.Y., *Dido and Aeneas* for New York Chamber Opera, and *Lakme* at Sarasota Opera. May 2005, included three Annual Comeback Recitals by Ira as Madame Vera at Symphony Space, and an appearance as Vera at Avery Fisher Hall hosting and singing in the Music For Life Gala. In July, he directed *La sonnambula* for Sumi Jo at The Caramoor Festiva, followed by *La Bohème* for Puerto Rico Opera. February 2006 brought a reprise of *Lakme* starring Eglise Gutierrez, this time in semi-staging at Carnegie Hall. In March 2006, Madame Vera celebrated twenty years of Annual Farewells with three sold-out recitals at Symphony Space (reprised in May, 2007). Ira directed *Turandot* starring Sharon Sweet in Princeton, March 2007, and was in residency in the summer of 2007 at the Tanglewood Music Center, staging *Così fan tutte*, conducted by James Levine. In addition to directing, singing and teaching, Ira Siff writes for Opera News, as a feature writer and CD and DVD critic, and writes CD notes for Opera D'Oro. This season he is the guest commentator on all the Saturday afternoon Metropolitan Opera radio broadcasts, semi-staged *La sonnambula* at Carnegie Hall for Opera Orchestra of New York, restaged his Tanglewood production of *Così* for Naples Opera, and is a guest teacher of bel canto technique at The Royal Conservatory in The Netherlands.