

This will be the first course that SMU will offer producing a Musical on campus!! “Putnam County Spelling Bee” will be performed by members of the class on June 1 and June 2, 2017 in the Margo Jones Theater in Meadows. Our students, even undergraduates, are having great success being cast in musicals in companies in the Metroplex. With this course, SMU curriculum will address educating and offering the skills necessary to be considered and cast in a musical. This course will stress dance and acting skills and training in the proper singing techniques, including belting, for the American Musical stage. Auditioning and casting will be done in early April so that on May 18 rehearsals can begin. The faculty for this team taught course includes experts in training the singing, dancing actor. Where as the minor in Musical Theater in the Meadows School addresses skills, there is yet no performance of a Musical. This fills not only a crucial need for our students, but reflects what the market is demanding. Students are producing musicals themselves for Parents Week End and the 24 Hour Musical in the Spring. There is no instruction of faculty involvement for these – the students want this!!

PERB 5310: American Musical Theater

Course Description: Preparation and performance of musical theater as an American art form.

Faculty: Hank Hammett, Virginia Dupuy, Sara Romersberger, Hank

Hammett

Space: Margot Jones Theater, Owen Fine Arts Building

Dates: May 18 – June 2

Times: 11 – 2, 3 – 5, 6:30 – 9p.m.

Musical Theater Course Syllabus

April 1: Auditions for the Musical

April 8: Post the casting

May 1: Role must be learned and memorized

May 18: Orientation and lecture: composer and librettist study

May 19: "The WHY of the American Musical: Evening: Musical coaching - Gunter

May 22: Musical coaching; Gunter Staging: Romersberger Evening: character development

May 23: Voice work a.m.: Dupuy PM: Staging: Director

May 24: Movement work a.m.: Romersberger PM: Rehearsal: Director

May 25: Acting work a.m.: Hammett PM: Rehearsal: Director

May 26: Rehearsal: Director Tech Rehearsal

May 29 Memorial Day – day off

May 30 Dress Rehearsal

May 31 Dress Rehearsal

June 1 Performance 1

June 2 Performance 2

Learning outcomes:

- Student will be prepared to audition for a musical production
- Student will improve dance, acting and singing skills
- Student will experience simultaneously acting, singing and moving as required by the role
- Student will be on stage everyday in rehearsal in a professional setting
- Student will gain ability to respond with immediacy and dependability

Hank Hammett

Director of Opera, Senior Lecturer

American lyric baritone Hank Hammett is an award-winning performer, director, teacher and coach who has sung and trained singing actors in the organic fields of music, voice, theater arts, acting technique, opera and strategic performance skills for over two and a half decades.

As an acting coach for singers, Mr. Hammett has worked on Broadway and Off-Broadway, in television and film (including Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln*), and at the world's most prestigious opera houses, including The Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, The Glimmerglass Festival, Boston Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera, The Dallas Opera, Portland Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Connecticut Opera, Bilbao Opera, L'Opéra de Montréal, Gran Teatre del Liceu (Barcelona) and De Nederlandse Opera (Amsterdam).

Hammett is the recipient of numerous awards and grants for singing, including First Prize in the Liederkrantz Competition in New York and the Grand Prix in the Concours International d'Oratorio et de Lied in France. He made his professional operatic debut as Mercutio in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* with the San Antonio Festival (Boris Goldovsky, director and conductor), and his professional recital debut in at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, with pianist Dale Dietert. He has since received critical acclaim on opera and concert stages throughout North America, Mexico and Europe.

While living in New York City for twelve years, in addition to maintaining a highly successful private studio, Hammett served as artistic director/stage director for the series "Supper & Song" and "Summer Sunday Sundown Concerts," as well as for "Voices of Spring" and "Beautiful Music in a Sacred Place." He served as music director/vocal coach for the acclaimed theatrical dance troupe Jane Comfort & Company and was the vocal diction coach for Off-Broadway productions of *Our Town*, *The Heidi Chronicles*, and *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Hammett also worked with The American Theatre Wing to produce and direct outreach concerts bringing theatrical music into schools, hospitals and retirement homes throughout the boroughs of New York.

Hammett has served as a consultant for The Dallas Opera's Education/Community Outreach department, where he was

commissioned to write and direct *Opera in a Box: Follow Your Dreams* for The Dallas Opera-SMU Emerging Artist Program. He continues his work with The Dallas Opera as featured speaker for the Joy and Ronald Mankoff Opera Overture Series.

Hammett received his Bachelor's and Master's of Music degrees from The University of Texas at Austin and did further study at The University of California-Santa Barbara, The Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies in Aldeburgh, England, and The Music Academy of the West. He studied acting technique at T. Schreiber Studio and MTB Studio in New York. In addition to his work at SMU, Hammett frequently gives master classes at universities and professional opera training programs including the Houston Grand Opera Studio and The Dallas Opera.

Virginia Dupuy

Professor, Voice

Virginia Dupuy has earned a reputation as one of the finest recital and concert singers in the United States. She has championed American music in recordings of the Grammy-nominated Voces Americanas, and she premiered the role of "Crone" in Conrad Susa's opera *Wise Women*. *Fanfare* magazine hailed her recording of Dominick Argento's Pulitzer Prize winner *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* as one of the top classical recordings of the year.

Dupuy made her Lincoln Center debut with the American Symphony Orchestra at Avery Fisher Hall and has appeared with the orchestras of Pittsburgh, Phoenix, Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth, Eugene and Honolulu. A professor of music at SMU's Meadows School of the Arts, she is a leading scholar and interpreter of music set to Emily Dickinson's texts. Gasparo Records, Inc. released *Dwell in Possibility*, a CD of 24 Dickinson poems and one letter performed by Dupuy with Shields-Collins Bray of *Voices of Change*, set to music by her esteemed friends, including Jake Heggie, Lee Hoiby, Dan Welcher, Richard Hundley, Simon Sargon and William Jordan. She continued her performances of contemporary composers with *Voices of Change* and the Cliburn Modern Composers Concerts with the composers Golijov, Danielpour, Higdon and Bolcom present. She sang songs and duets, including texts of Sister Helen Prejean, with Jake Heggie at the Cliburn's "Modern at the Modern" in Fort Worth with pianist and producer Shields-Collins Bray. She continues to

perform “Emily Dickinson in Song” throughout the country. Her student, tenor Juan de Leon, made his Metropolitan Opera debut in October 2013 and performs all over the world. Other Dupuy students have recently won regional Metropolitan Opera auditions and are apprentices at Santa Fe Opera, Glimmerglass, Wolf Trap, Chautauqua, Des Moines, Opera North and Los Angeles Opera. Dupuy also is the liaison and founder of the Emerging Artist Program, a partnership for SMU graduate students and the Dallas Opera. Dupuy is in demand throughout the United States as a teacher of master classes. In spring 2016, she produced a workshop, “Strategies for Performing Contemporary Music,” for the Los Angeles NATS chapter on the campus of Loyola Marymount University. In 2010, she produced a symposium prior to the opening of the opera, *Moby Dick*, by Jake Heggie at the Winspear Opera House in partnership with the Dallas Opera, Meadows School of the Arts and the Texas Book Festival. Dupuy is currently producing master classes for SMU with coach Tom Jaber, New York agent Gabriel Couret, and Metropolitan Opera music staff member Vlad Iftinca. As a member of the company of Dallas-based “Voices of Change,” Dupuy will perform Ravel’s *Chanson Madecasses* in January 2017. She will return to the Georgetown Festival of the Arts in early June 2017, performing song cycles of Elgar and Britten.

Sara Romersberger

Associate Professor

Sara Romersberger is a movement specialist and tenured Associate Professor of Theatre who incorporates dance, stage combat and Lecoq international movement theatre training to create and direct movement, clowning and fight choreography for text-based and movement theatre and opera, nationally and internationally.

Romersberger has won numerous awards, grants and accolades, including a Leon Rabin Award for Special Recognition for Outstanding Choreography for her work on *The Wrestling Season* at Dallas Children’s Theatre in 2005 and a Meadows Foundation Grant to produce and choreograph two productions of *La Discreta Enamorada* with Spanish director Gustavo Tambascio in 2006. Nationally, Romersberger was president of the Association for

Theatre Movement Educators from 2006 to 2008, co-creator and teacher for M.O.V.E. (Movement Observation Vision Experimentation) in Phoenix, Ariz., and has taught weeklong workshops at Boston University, the University of South Carolina, National Theatre of the Deaf and at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, among other locations.

International production credits include choreography and assistant direction for the opera *Hangman, Hangman!/The Town of Greed*, which had its world premiere at Teatro de la Zarzuela, Madrid, Spain in September 2007 and was subsequently performed in Barcelona with a new cast at Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona, Spain, November 2007.

Prior to coming to SMU in 1998, Romersberger held full-time faculty positions at Illinois Wesleyan University (tenured 1988), West Virginia University and Elon College, N.C.

With strong roots in modern dance and jazz, Romersberger has choreographed over 55 university and professional musical theatre productions. She has directed and performed her own brand of movement theatre in off-Broadway productions in New York at The Mint Theatre (*Jackson Pollock: In The Painting*) and Primary Stages (*Hanna: A Run-On Odyssey*) and has danced with New York-based companies Julie Maloney Dance Company and Wendy Osserman Dance.

Her extensive knowledge and production experience in the clowns of Shakespeare, the Commedia Dell'Arte and physical theatre have garnered her invitations to teach abroad in Amsterdam, Netherlands; Athens, Greece; and Pretoria, South Africa.