

To whom it may concern,

It gives me great pleasure to speak to specifics about Micah's teaching and musical abilities in addition to her diverse background (music theater undergraduate degree) which, I believe, along with her Vocal Pedagogy studies at Syracuse University prepares her to share her expertise as a future teacher/University faculty.

I have been Micah's private voice professor during her graduate Vocal Pedagogy studies at Syracuse University. As a tenured voice faculty with more than 30 years of teaching experience, it is rare to find such an inspiring young woman who exemplifies the qualities of both a dedicated learner/student while simultaneously displaying her aptitude for research and new ideas which she shares in the classroom with such joy and dedication.

Because of her music theater and acting background, Micah is dedicated to delving into somatic practices that she believes are important and lacking in many Schools of Music curriculums. She has codified an approach to working with singers that applies somatic methods to the opera rehearsal and to the traditional vocal studio. She first presented her philosophy at the IUGTE (International University Global Theatre Experience) in July, 2022 in Laubergg, Austria. And in January 2023 in Houston, TX at the NOA Annual Conference she did a poster presentation entitled "Musical Viewpoints: Modifying Viewpoints to Serve the Opera Rehearsal Process" which won first prize.

As Micah's private voice professor, I have been very impressed by her self-observation and continual progress as she hones her "legit" vocal technique. She is organized and proactive, and along with being technically savvy; these strengths have allowed her to successfully create a class syllabus for the AMC 110 Voice class that she was assigned to teach in Spring 2023.

Before the Spring 2023 semester began, I met with Micah and another graduate student who were originally scheduled to co-teach this AMC 110 Beginners voice class. Because there was such a large number of students registered, it was decided to split the students into two separate classes.

I suggested an Alexander book for singers to base some of their teaching on and gave a few examples of exercises from the text I thought should be incorporated into the class. I then left it up to the graduate students to come up with a syllabus incorporating ideas from the Alexander book and sources from their graduate studies.

I planned to edit the completed syllabus. However, I was very impressed at the finished product and did not have to make any major changes. The layout and content was very well organized and the Power Point presentation was visually effective. Even though both graduates were expected to create this syllabus together, it was evident that Micah was the most proactive member of the team in gathering the material needed and designing the Power Point format.

It was a very ambitious syllabus that covered all the most important aspects of singing, as well as referring to acting techniques. As the semester has gone along both graduates have had to decide from week to week how detailed they could be when addressing the material based on the level of the singers they had in their class.

I thought the "Preliminary Survey form that was posted on the University website for class students to fill out was a great idea; asking them questions about their background, and what they were most looking

forward to. But even more important, because of the wide diversity of vocal levels within the class it was a challenge at the beginning of the semester to get students comfortable to sing together or for each other. At the beginning of each class Micah asked a “question of the day”. It was not necessarily music-related, and focused on something in their lives. I saw students really relax and become more open as they got to talk about their interests or opinions in a safe environment. These activities all tied into the course requirements and expectations listed in the syllabus which included an important statement: “Respect where classmates are in their singing journey” I was very happy to see that Micah and her fellow grad student were very purposeful in how they presented the material, always focusing on positivity while they were teaching the technical aspects of how to sing. .

I saw students actively participating at each class while Micah led the physical warmups, followed by vocal warmups at the piano or singing an example for them to repeat. It was decided, with my input , to assign 2 easy pop songs to the voice class so that they could learn the notes together and eventually sing in groups and then individually. Because some students couldn’t read music, Micah who has piano skills played the music on the piano, and also provided diverse audio samples of different approaches to their songs on the Power Point class presentations. She was aware of the need to reinforce various ways for the students to hear and learn the music so that they could see a variety of artists interpretations. These examples supported the topic of acting choices or a personal story when singing a song; showing students that this was also an integral ingredient to performing, not just focusing on technical abilities.

In summary, I am very impressed by the layout of the voice class syllabus and how Micah taught these vocal principles to the students. She learned as she went along to modify and adapt to the students’ needs and vocal abilities. That was a learning curve initially, but Micah adapted.

I was also happy to see that scheduled into the syllabus by week 2; all students got to meet with Micah individually to sing for her and for her to get to know each of their voices. This was important and very helpful; allowing her to see more clearly what she would be able to accomplish during the semester and also what she might need to skim over based on their diverse vocal abilities.

Micah is able to speak about complex anatomical concepts in a way that is clear and appropriate for amateur singers. She asked stimulating questions, tying into the students’ somatic experiences. She allowed the students to experience the exercises and then asked them what their experience was, not explaining details up front but allowing them to experience singing. And after they finished singing, she asked questions that allowed each student to reflect on how they perceived the experience and what they had learned from it.

I am very pleased with Micah’s teaching abilities at this early stage in her career. Having had the opportunity to teach a University undergraduate class on her own has given Micah invaluable insight and experience that many graduates don’t get. I have had the opportunity to give her input and answer any of her questions and she has shown herself to be a strong and independent teacher with good people skills and instincts. Her organizational skills coupled with her people skills is a real positive as she graduates and looks toward a university teaching career.

Dr. Julianna Sabol