

## **Dr. Madeline Miskie – Teaching Statement**

Singing requires a great deal of courage and vulnerability. For this reason and many others, I have a great deal of respect for my students of all ages and skill levels. My primary goal is to create a calm, safe space for learning in which any student can feel free to experiment with different sounds and learn at their own pace while exploring a wide variety of repertoire and a wide variety of vocal styles. Under normal circumstances, I divide lesson time between vocal technique (breath / posture / vocal exercises) and song interpretation / character development; as both are equally important in the process of nurturing a healthily functioning voice and creating a compelling performance.

I approach singing from a holistic perspective; with the understanding that the quality of one's voice on a given day is influenced by a wide range of factors; from sleep, posture, diet, and hydration to mood, stress levels, emotional state, energy levels, fatigue, etc.

First and foremost I emphasize the importance of deepening one's sense of physical awareness because I believe that this self-knowledge is the key to understanding one's own voice. When a student becomes aware of their habits, they then have the power to create positive changes. Over time, the student may discover breath / postural / tension / thought / emotional patterns which inhibit the freedom of their voice and thereby the quality of their sound. Once the pattern(s) are discovered, we work together to develop strategies to simultaneously eliminate inefficient habits and develop new patterns that favor efficiency; a 'less-is-more' approach. Major somatic modalities which influence my vocal teaching include: Yoga, Self-Myofascial Release (SMR), Laban Movement, Alexander Technique, , meditation, Lessac Kinesensic Voice Training and Linklater.

On the creative side, I strongly emphasize character analysis within the context (and outside) of the voice lesson, as I believe it is necessary for a truthful, authentic and polished performance. As in monologue work, students become aware of the dramatic 'beats' in the text of their song lyrics, which often coincide with shifts in a song's musical texture. Through character 'interviews' and movement / acting exercises, I aim to guide students towards a clear understanding of their character's objective for each dramatic beat and for the dramatic arc of the song overall.