

Schulich School of Music
McGill University

Course Title: *Fundamentals of Vocal and Instrumental Studio Pedagogy* – Special Project in Performance (3 credits)

Course Number: MUPG 475-001

Course Schedule: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday, 13:35-16:25; May 1-25, 2017

Reading Materials: *Fundamentals of Vocal and Instrumental Studio Pedagogy* Document

Instructor: Merlin B. Thompson Ph.D., M.A., B.Mus. is one of Canada's leading authorities on studio music teaching. Currently, Thompson is a teacher mentor in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. Thompson is an active music education scholar whose works have been published in *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, *American Suzuki Journal*, *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, *Journal of School Choice*, *Educational Theory*, and *American Music Teacher*. Thompson has worked with hundreds of children, their parents, and teachers in workshops, institutes, conferences, established programs, and mentorships throughout Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Spain, and Great Britain. From 1988-2004, he was the Artistic Director of the Mount Royal College Suzuki Piano Program in Calgary, Alberta.

Office hours: By appointment.

Welcome to *Fundamentals of Vocal and Instrumental Studio Pedagogy*. This course examines the essential strategies involved in teaching students how to sing or play a musical instrument during their first four to five years. Drawing from current research in music education, music philosophers, and the practical experience of working with hundreds of students, this course differs from other standard music education resources by building on three distinctive instructional dynamics. Namely, that effective music instruction is:

- *Based on our relationships with music* – musical relationships encompass everything from intense involvement to casual exploration to complete distraction. This means music teaching

is more than mere transmission of musical knowledge and skills. It's about helping students uncover more of their individual relations with music.

- *Driven by students' interests.* Students thrive as autonomous learners who value exploration, creation, and mastery. This means teaching goes beyond passive student repetition of performance drills. It's about actively engaging students in their own meaningful learning.
- *Guided by teachers' expertise.* Teachers are more than assertive authorities who control students' awareness of what's wrong or right. Because teachers have vast musical and instructional knowledge, they're able to lead students when they cannot lead themselves, pass on the musical tools students need, and expand students' ongoing relation with music.

Based upon the changing currents in music education philosophy and grounded in the reality of today's studio teaching environment, this course engages musicians in the critical examination of their own musical development. It serves as a practical and insightful resource, shedding light on why certain aspects of teaching result in successful student learning and other aspects fail to achieve the desired intent.

Course Topics: *Fundamentals of Vocal and Instrumental Studio Pedagogy* will cover the following topics in class. Please note – there may be minimal changes to the schedule.

- Week One
 - Our relation with music
 - Independence & ownership in children's learning
 - Authenticity – the notion of being true to oneself
- Week Two
 - Principles of learning
 - Relevant educational theories
 - Language learning model
 - Learning by ear
 - Music learning
 - Background stage
 - Foundation stage – tonalization and learning by ear
 - Learning by reading stage
- Week Three
 - Principles of music teaching
 - Music teaching from a historical perspective
 - Music teaching & democratic relationships
 - Music teaching as parenting model
- Week Four

- Teaching the student & teaching the repertoire
 - Review & refinement
 - Advocating & agitating student development
- Taking parents into consideration
 - Historical implications
 - Essential conversations
 - Parental interest

Assignments: Please consult the Assignment Information document for full descriptions of the assignments.

Assignment	Description	Due date	Weight
#1	Your Musical Autobiography & Identity	Monday, May 1, 24:00	20%
#2	Week One Reflection	Sunday, May 7, 24:00	20%
#3	Week Two Reflection	Sunday, May 14, 24:00	20%
#4	Week Three Reflection	Sunday, May 21, 24:00	20%
#5	Week Four Reflection	Sunday, May 28, 24:00	20%

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« L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir

de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).