What you should be doing right now

Picking a Graduate School

Auditioning

Realities of the business
You will NEVER again have this much time to focus on singing – ever.

Don’t put yourself behind from the start.

Be aware of the reality of the opera world.

Be aware there is a world outside of OBU period.
Learn how to sing—if you don’t, everything else is pointless

- Technique
- Diction
- Performance practice—roles, recitals, studio, church
- Languages
UNDERGRADUATE

- Look for opportunities outside of the school
  - Regional companies
    - Let them know you exist
  - Summer programs
  - Workshops
  - Go see operas and musicals elsewhere
UNDERGRADUATE

- Get another degree/minor/skill while you are here
  - Marketing
  - Graphic Design
  - Accounting/bookkeeping
  - Web Design
  - Programming
  - Technical Theater
  - Grant Writing
  - Teaching Certificate
  - Personal Trainer
UNDERGRADUATE

LEARN TO PLAY THE PIANO

FOR REAL!!!!
YOUNG ARTIST PROGRAMS

You can learn more about this profession in one summer at a good YAP than you can in four years at school. You MUST do one of these somewhere along the way.
Young Artist Programs

- Why do a YAP?
  - 24/7 immersion in opera
  - You will know if this is the career for you by the time you leave
  - You get as much stage time in 2 months as you do in 2 years at school
  - Connections with working professionals
  - Easier to do now than when you have a “real” life
Young Artist Programs

Pay-to-Sing vs. No-Pay-No-Fee vs. Paid to Sing

Choose wisely.

Pay if it is worth it for the role(s), connections, or overall experience.
Young Artist Programs

www.yaptracker.com
Young Artist Programs

Pay to Play
- Opera in the Ozarks
- OperaWorks
- BASOTI
- Opera NEO
- Multiple Italian Programs
- Lyric Opera Studio Weimar

Paid to Play
- Seagle Colony
- Opera North
- Natchez Festival
- Glimmerglass
- Merola
- Opera Theatre St. Louis
- Music Academy of the West
- Central City Opera
- Santa Fe
- Wolftrap
- Des Moines Metro Opera
- Ashlawn
- Ohio Light Opera
Young Artist Programs

Consider music theater summer stock opportunities

SETC

UPTAs
When selecting a graduate school consider:

- Teacher
- Performance Opportunities
- Cost
- Location
Teacher

- You are going to graduate school to become a better singer so having a good teacher is important.
  - How have their recent students done?
  - Do you want/need to study with your voice type?
  - Are you guaranteed to study with the teacher of your choice?
  - Is your teacher connected?

- Don’t forget to think about your coach as well.
Graduate School

Performance Opportunities

- How many productions does the school do per year?
- Are you going to be a stand-out and be cast regularly, or are you going to be one of 45 sopranos vying for three roles?
- Is there a DMA program?
- Are there student led or external performance opportunities?
- Do you have to sing in a choir?
- Do you want opera and music theater training/opportunities?
Graduate School

- Cost
  - How much debt do you want to accrue?
  - Assistantships
    - Opera
    - Teaching Voice
    - Teaching other music classes
Location

- How much is the cost of living?
- How far are you from auditions?
- Are there other performance opportunities near?
- How far is it from home?
Auditioning

- Resume
- Headshot
- Website
- Know what you are
- Repertoire
- General Tips
- What I’m looking for as a casting directing
Resume

- Keep it simple, clear, and clean
- Triple check for typos
- Check capitalizations of foreign words
  - ex. La traviata, Le nozze di Figaro
- Keep it to one page. At most front and back of a page
- Simple, easy to read fonts
- All black or very few colors
Resume Content

- Name, Voice, Email, Website, Phone Number, Address (optional)
- Role, Opera, Company, Year
- Education
- Training Programs (YAPS)
- Major Awards
- Conductors, Directors, Teachers, Coaches (Very Important)
- Special Skills: Languages, Instruments, Combat, Juggling, anything that makes you more employable.
- Picture is nice in my opinion
- Always label the file with your name (joshshawresume.docx)
Headshot

- Must look like you
- Doesn’t have to cost a fortune
- Look comfortable and confident
- Have a color and black and white (digital)
- Have one with your name and without (digital)
- For print, it is best to have a vertical color shot with your name
- Always label the file with your name (joshshaw.jpeg)
Examples of Headshots and Resumes
Website

- You need a website right now
- Learn to do it yourself for easy updates and changes
  - Wix.com, Wordpress, etc
- Should contain: Bio, Resume, Pictures, Audio Clips, Video, Performance Schedule, Downloadable Headshot, bio and resume, measurement sheet, contact form, link to Youtube Channel and FB Page
- Domain name is important. Choose something easily searchable and identifiable.
- Design it so it works on all devices and platforms
- Keep it updated!
Know who/what you are

- Audition for roles that you can actually sing (the whole role, not just the aria) and that you look appropriate for
- Find your niche and pursue those roles
- Audition for roles appropriate for your age
Audition Repertoire

- Find your five arias and practice them relentlessly.
- Always sing what you sing best, regardless of the situation. When in doubt, sing your easiest piece.
- If you ever think, “I probably know all the words.” Skip it.
- Sing from the show whenever possible.
- Don’t audition with a French piece for an Italian season.
- Short arias are better than long arias in most cases.
- Obscure arias will rarely get you the job.
- Good to bring a printed list always.
General Audition Tips

- Always be early

- Confidence (false or deserved) is always more attractive than nerves

- Do everything you can to be likeable

- Singing an easy song well is 1000 times better than singing a hard song poorly

- Canceling an audition is better than bombing an audition

- Never no-show
General Audition Tips

- Try to find some personal connection to the company or staff.
- Be willing to take a lesser role.
- Sending a “thank you for hearing me” email never hurts your chances.
- Mark your music clearly.
- Bring an accompanist if it makes you feel better about your chances.
- Don’t be afraid to take a risk with an interpretation or character choice.
General Audition Tips

- Do something to make them remember you.
  - Joke, “hello” from so-and-so, wear something a little different

- Cheat—go to the internet and research who you are auditioning for. Find out who you know in common. What kind of productions does the company typically do? Are they usually straight-laced and traditional? Do they like “crazy”? Has this director done the show you are auditioning for? Can you see a video of that on-line?

- Cheat some more – Wear out Youtube watching different versions of your arias and take what you like.
General Audition Tips

- Get off the couch and go to the gym. Opera is more and more concerned with appearance.

- Audition Attire

- Prioritize auditions. You can’t get to every audition and there is no reason to try. Be smart about what roles and companies you may actually have a shot at. Don’t sing for a company before you are ready. Also, take a look at a company’s history. If they’ve hired the same tenor for the last five shows, they are probably going to hire him again.
What I’m looking for in an audition

- First and foremost, I have to believe you can sing the role on any given day, under any circumstances.

- You have to be able to act.

- You have to look the part.

- You have to seem easy to work with, excited about the opportunity, ready to work hard, and have a personality that says, “this person is going to be so much fun to work with”.
Hodgepodge

- December in New York
- Coaches
- Languages
- Resources
  - Classical Singer, YAPTracker, Castel Books, Opera News, Opera America
- Split focus on opera and music theatre
- DMA
Realities of a Career in Opera

- Student Loan Debt
- Cost of auditioning
- Balancing a day job with a career
- Lifestyle
- Family life
- Best case scenario
- Options for after the career