

MUSIC 272 (Spring 2025) Sight Singing IV

Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays 12:15 – 13:05

Rm. 206

Instructor: Dr. Eric Chernov
website: <https://www.ursatz.com>
email: eric.chernov@qc.cuny.edu

Office: 211
Office phone: N/A
Office Hours: Thursdays 11:00-12:00 and
by appointment (in-person or via zoom)

class open forum address: 272@lists.ursatz.com

Supplies (bring with you to all sight singing classes)

Textbooks: Berkowitz, Fontrier, and Kraft. *A New Approach to Sight Singing*. Sixth Edition.
New York: W. W. Norton & Co Inc.

Other: Staff paper, pencil(s), eraser(s). Dictation done in anything except pencil will not be looked at and will receive a grade of "0"

A working, portable metronome will be shown to the teacher no later than the end of the second week of classes. This does not need to be brought to every class, but it will be an integral part of the student's weekly homework.

GRADING¹

This course consists of two components: Dictation (R) and Sight Singing (TF). You will get a separate grade for each component, which is then averaged as follows: Sight Singing (and other performed work) counts for 66.67% (two thirds) of the grade. Dictation work counts for 33.33% (one third) of the grade.

The grade for *each component* of the course will be assessed as follows:

Homework assignments and in-class work: 65%
Mid-term exam: 15%
Final exam: 20%
Participation: [see Attendance Policy, below]

Thus, if you make an 88 in sight singing, but an 80 in dictation, your final grade would be:
 $(88 \times .6667) + (80 \times .3333) = 58.6696 + 26.664 = 85.3336$

Final letter grades are assigned according to the following scale:

A+ = 97-100	A = 93-96	A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
F = 0-59		

¹ The information in this section is intended primarily for students who have Dr. Chernov for both sight singing and dictation. If you have another professor for the sight singing portion, you should consult their syllabus. In either case, the dictation portion will still be calculated as outlined here.

Weekly assignment grades convert letters to the *highest* associated number for calculation purposes (A+ = 100; A = 96; A- = 92; B+ = 89; etc.), except for F which will convert to 0.

ACSM policy mandates that an overall grade of C- or better, **as well as** passing grades (minimum of D) in **both** sight singing and dictation, are required in order to pass MUS 272.

Per this policy, a student whose **final average** is C- or higher, but who does not have **at least a D** in either sight singing or dictation will receive a **final grade** of F.

CLASS POLICIES

Solfege:

The writing in of solfege syllables on any music is strictly prohibited.

Students who have used books with syllables written in should see me immediately to discuss rectifying the situation.

Syllable writing-in may consist of any of the following:

a full syllable (for example, "La"), an abbreviation (for example, "L"),

a syllable written-in and then erased, or even a syllable using another alphabet (for example, Cyrillic (п), Greek (λ), Hebrew (ל), etc.)

Students with syllables written in will receive a zero (0) on the assignment.

The writing in of letters (note names) on music is also prohibited.

Students *may* (and **SHOULD**) write other things on their music, however.

(For example: fingerings, countings, analytical markings, etc.)

Homework:

Please note that homework assignments will be posted on my website in the "courses" section.

Sight singing is a performance class, meant to impart good performance habits.

There is no excuse for not being prepared. See attendance policy, below, for more detail.

Attendance:

Attendance will be taken at every class. Students will be allowed 4 unexcused absences from MUS 272.

In general, students will have a week to prepare the *prepared* assignments, with Tuesdays being devoted mainly to melodic material and Fridays being devoted mainly to duets and sing-and-plays.

Sight singing is a performance class, meant to impart good performance habits.

As such, the following attendance policies should be noted:

Students will be allowed to make up two missed sing-and-play assignments. These must be made up within a week of the original due date. *It is the student's responsibility to arrange the make-up appointment.* Sing-and-plays which do not get made up will be marked as a "0" in the grade book. Any additional missed sing-and-play assignments beyond the two in which make-ups are allowed will be marked as a "0" in the grade book. In short, the student is responsible and will receive a grade for *all* sing-and-plays.

Except for the above sing-and-play policy, a student who is absent will not have an opportunity to perform the missed material. There will not be a failing grade entered for other missed material; there will simply be fewer grades in the book to calculate the homework average.

Dictation material *cannot* be made up. A student may miss 3 dictation days.

A 5-point reduction on the student's *final* sight singing grade will result for each additional dictation session missed.

Students are expected to show up to class *on time*.

A 2-point reduction on the student's *final* sight singing grade will result for every 2 instances of tardiness.

MATERIALS COVERED

MUS 272 covers the various fourth sections of the textbook.

MUS 272 aims to impart to students:

- Advanced-level chromaticism in sight singing melodies (including tonicizations and modulations).
- Fluency in tenor clef, including its use in Sing-and-Plays.
- Rhythmic complexity, including syncopation, new time signatures (and their associated conducting patterns), etc.
- Dictation in 1, 2, and 4 voices.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to adhere to the college's Academic Integrity policies.

A copy of those policies may be found here:

<https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-procedures/academic-integrity-policy/>

In-Class Technology Policy

Students are expected to have cell phones, digital cameras, laptops, etc. put away during class time (though they may be kept on). During quizzes and exams, these devices are to be put away and *turned off*.

NO so-called "wearable" computers (e.g., Google Glass™) are permitted in the classroom.

NO photographs or videos may be taken during class. Photographs or videos taken in class will result in failure on all work for that day (first offence) or failure of the course (second offence).

Email

Students are *strongly* encouraged to enter my email address and the class open forum address into their email address book and/or on their "safe list." This is particularly true of those with AOL accounts. Notifications from ISPs that legitimate emails sent from me or the class open forum have been tagged as spam will result in the removal of the student's address from the open forum list. This could result in missing important class announcements, for which I take no responsibility.

STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO CHECK THEIR EMAIL REGULARLY.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Special Services Office, Kiely 171; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of classes. For more information about services available to Queens College students, contact: Mirian Detres-Hickey, Ph.D., Special Services Office; 171 Kiely Hall; 718-997-5870 (8:00am to 5:00pm); email: Mirian.detreshickey@qc.cuny.edu

SOME IMPORTANT DATES

NO CLASS:

Feb 18 (Tue) Monday Schedule
Mar 06 (Thu) Wednesday Schedule
Apr 15 (Tue) Spring Break
Apr 17 (Thu) Spring Break
Apr 18 (Fri) Spring Break

LAST CLASS OF THE SEMESTER:

May 15 (Thu)

MIDTERM EXAM:

Mar 20 (Thu): Dictation
Mar 21 (Fri): Sight Singing

FINAL EXAM:

May 08 (Thu): Dictation
May 16-22 (exact date/time TBA): Sight Singing

A FEW WORDS TO CONSIDER

JIM NEGLIA, noted contractor (NJ Symphony, The Who, Jacksonville Symphony, Hugh Jackman, etc.):

“Some are curious how musicians get added to my ‘hire’ list. Generally speaking, I hear about other talented musicians from colleagues and conductors. Getting on my list by a solid reference is not the real challenge; staying on my list requires some doing, however. How does one remain on my hiring list? There is an easy answer to that question: **don’t be a jerk and impossible to work with; don’t be needy; don’t be unreasonable; don’t make more work for me; be on time, smile, and as I like to say, play nice in the sandbox.** That is the secret of getting and staying on my list.”

HARLAN ELLISON:

“As a writer of matters fantastic and as a critic of the field, I get a lot of mail, and they are filled with opinions. Everybody has opinions: I have them, you have them. And we are all told from the moment we open our eyes, that everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. Well, that’s horsepuckey, of course. We are not entitled to our opinions; we are entitled to our *informed* opinions. Without research, without background, without understanding, it’s nothing. It’s just bibble-babble.”

DAVID BOWIE:

“A discipline doesn't mean that you make sure that you have breakfast at eight o'clock in the morning and you are out of the house by half past eight. A discipline is...if you conceive some thing, then you decide whether or not it's worth following through, and if it's worth following through then you follow it through to its logical conclusion, and do it...to the best of your ability. That's a discipline, yes?”

LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN:

“Persevere, do not only practice your art, but endeavor also to fathom its inner meanings; *it deserves this effort.*”*

* Beethoven wrote this in a July 17, 1812 letter to a little girl, Emilie M., in response to a fan letter she had written him.

W. A. MOZART (purported remark to *Don Giovanni* conductor, Jan Křtitel Kuchař):

“It is a mistake to think that the practice of my art has become easy to me. I assure you, dear friend, no one has given so much care to the study of composition as I. There is scarcely a famous master in music whose works I have not frequently and diligently studied.”

HARRY NILSSON:

“Now I would like to spend a few minutes talking about song construction, which is one of the most important parts of song-writing. .. First of all, in construction, I might say that you have to get to know your song. You got to take it apart, put it back together again; keep it clean, because some day in combat it might save your life.”

JOHN PAUL JONES:

“I just keep listening....In composition, and playing to a certain extent, everything is really—at a basic level—about questions and answers. You have musical questions and you need to find the answers to them; This is especially true of composition, that's what it's all about. Things like, ‘how does the piece start?’ ‘Then what happens?’ ‘Then what happens?’ And so what you'll do is you'll get a musical idea, then you have to realize it. And in the realization it's just questions and answers. ‘How does it finish?’ ‘What will make it interesting now that we've done this for a little while?’....All music has the same questions and answers; it doesn't matter what type it is, it's still—whether it's Pygmy music, a Mongolian Nose flute—it's still, like, ‘how do I present a musical idea? How do you have tension and release’ and so on. It's all there. And you can very often hear how other people and other musics and other styles answer these same questions. And whilst you might not incorporate a salsa lick, you think, ‘Ah! I like the way, you know, to raise the tension, they've just not used the root; they've just used the third.’ Or, ‘they've not played the downbeat.’ And all this can come in useful as sort of reference material for your own questions, for your own music. And so I think it's VERY important to listen to everything that's out there. It's one thing I do tell young musicians is don't close your ears to music you don't know.”

In re CHARLES IVES:

“Moreover, having pursued the full implications of play, Charlie was urged by father ‘not to stop when it got hard.’ The permissive father displays a strong hand only in insisting that you know how to do it ‘right’ before you are permitted to do it ‘wrong’ and that, having been adventurous (‘roam for fun’), you not retreat fearfully but ‘stick it to the end.’ He makes it clear that all this is in the service of something beyond play—namely, the musical idea: there had to be ‘some sense behind it.’ What the student sought did not have to be conventional or thought out at the outset (‘maybe not very much or too good a sense, but something more than just thoughtless fooling’). Above all, he had not to accept rules blindly. The conditions for innovation were created by George for Charlie, an ideally responsive student. Permission, play, and perseverance were important elements.”*

* from Stuart Feder’s “Charles Ives: My Father’s Song: A Psychoanalytic Biography.” The quotes within are direct from Ives himself.