

Dr. Alisa Jordheim, soprano

Teaching Biography, Philosophy of Voice Teaching, and Statement on Teaching Style

Described as “vocally resplendent,” “powerful,” and possessing “impeccable coloratura” (San Francisco Chronicle), soprano Alisa Jordheim is praised for her compelling and vocally assured performances in opera, oratorio, musical theatre, early and new music, and recital. Recent operatic role highlights include Gilda in *Rigoletto* with San Diego Opera, Cunégonde in *Candide* with Palm Beach Opera, 1st Knappe in *Parsifal* with Opéra national de Paris, Ninetta in *La gazza ladra* with Teatro Nuovo, Clotilde in *Maria, regina d’Inghilterra* with Odyssey Opera, Hanna Glawari in *The Merry Widow* with New Philharmonic Opera, Venus in *Venus & Adonis* and Belinda in *Dido & Aeneas* with Florentine Opera, Luna/The Girl in *The Rose Elf* (world premiere) with The Crypt Sessions/The Angel’s Share in Brooklyn, and Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Boston Midsummer Opera. With the New York Opera Society, Dr. Jordheim created the role of Ruth Maier (“Norway’s Anne Frank”) in *Letters from Ruth*, a new musical by Norwegian composer-librettist team Gisle Kverndokk and Aksel-Otto Bull. Other recent operatic roles include: Soeur Constance in *Dialogues des Carmélites* with the Caramoor International Music Festival; Lola in the world premiere and recording of *Sister Carrie*, Lulu Baines in *Elmer Gantry*, Miss Wordsworth in *Albert Herring*, Frasquita in *Carmen*, and Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Florentine Opera; Marzelline in *Fidelio* with Madison Opera; Satirino in *La Calisto* with Cincinnati Opera; Nannetta in *Falstaff* with Emerald City Opera; Micaëla in *Carmen* with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra/Opera Columbus; Lucia in *The Rape of Lucretia* and Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Merola Opera Program in San Francisco; Flora in *The Turn of the Screw* with Central City Opera. While she was in Paris singing with Opéra national de Paris, Dr. Jordheim appeared as the soprano soloist in Mozart’s *Requiem* and Haydn’s *Insanae et vanae curae* with Ensemble Pygmalion at Versailles. She has performed as soloist with the Grant Park Music Festival, Las Vegas Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Present Music, Columbus Symphony, Greeley Philharmonic, Madison Symphony, Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra, Dayton Philharmonic, Cincinnati Bach Ensemble, Madison Bach Musicians, and the Fox Valley Symphony, among others. She is the voice of Bel in the animated short film *Over the Horizon*, written and directed by David Pierson.

Dr. Jordheim is the winner of both the Sullivan Foundation Award and a Career Development Grant from the William Matheus Sullivan Musical Foundation, as well as the Irwin Scherzer Encouragement Award from the George London Foundation. She won the Bel Canto Regional Artists Competition, took 2nd place in the Classical Singer Vocal Competition - Young Artist Division, won the Edith Newfield Scholarship in the Musicians Club of Women Music Scholarship Competition in Chicago, and received the Irwin Scherzer Encouragement Award from the George London Foundation. She was also the recipient of the Central City Opera Young Artist Award, two-time winner of the Wisconsin District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and a finalist in the Kurt Weill Foundation’s Lotte Lenya International Competition. Additionally, Dr. Jordheim is the recipient of a Central City Opera Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program Award. She was recently featured in Fred Plotkin’s “40 under 40: A New Generation of Superb Opera Singers” on WQXR, New York’s Public Radio station and website.

A native of Appleton, Wisconsin, Dr. Jordheim completed her first two years of undergraduate study at Lawrence University, where she studied with Patrice Michaels. She earned her Bachelor of Music (summa cum laude), Master of Music, and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in Voice Performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) as a student of William McGraw, and her DMA cognate field is Scandinavian song and diction.

As a Fulbright Scholar and Fellow of the American-Scandinavian Foundation, Dr. Jordheim studied and conducted research on singing diction in the Scandinavian languages at the University of Oslo in 2013-2014. She frequently performs recitals of songs by Scandinavian composers, has published an article on Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish singing diction in the *NATS Journal of Singing*, and has completed English and IPA translations of numerous songs by Scandinavian composers. She is also an advocate of new music for voice, having premiered works composed for her by Lori Laitman, Douglas Pew, Joanne Metcalf, Josh Deutsch, and Rodney Rogers.

At the collegiate level, Dr. Jordheim has taught both classical and musical theatre styles privately at CCM, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music, and Temple University. She has also taught classical and musical theatre styles to students of all ages at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music and the Lawrence University Academy of Music, and she has been an invited guest artist and master class teacher at universities and music festivals across the country. As a member of the 2010 Central City Opera Regional Tour and the 2012-2013 Florentine Opera Studio, Dr. Jordheim enjoyed visiting numerous schools, spanning from the elementary to the high school level, performing and educating youth about healthy singing. Dr. Jordheim has a special interest in health and wellness as they directly relate to singing, and she has worked as a State Tested Nursing Assistant in Ohio and as a Physician's Record Assistant in the ER at Appleton Medical Center.

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Philosophy of Voice Teaching

My primary goals in teaching voice are to establish a strong foundation of technique to foster singing longevity, and to instruct students on how best to teach themselves, thus enabling them to become effective and independent artists. I encourage my students to explore their interests outside of music and to discover connections between their performance activities and their study in other areas. When students of any age acquire an education of adequate depth and breadth – both in and beyond their primary area of study – they are equipped and empowered to become informed, perceptive, and courageous artists. And, with a solid technique and a working knowledge of various styles and performance practices, students are free to make intelligent musical choices and find their niche in the larger artistic world, whether they pursue music as a profession or avocation.

Statement on Teaching Style

A particularly beautiful element of singing is that each of our voices is inherently different than that of anyone else. Thus, my goal as a teacher is to encourage students to develop their unique voice and help them to become the best singer they can be. I believe that a strong, healthy technique enables freedom of musical expression, and honest diction enables better singing. The foundation of my teaching is the Italian bel canto style with emphasis on the breath, resonance, healthy registration, abdominal engagement (support), and singing with the full body. I am a firm believer in the importance of developing legato, vocal flexibility, and chest voice, and learning to sing multiple genres of music as they inform each other. In my teaching, I believe that a combination of physiological knowledge, kinesthetic awareness, and imagery is paramount, but I also strive to adapt to a student's learning style, explain technical and musical concepts in various ways, and demonstrate frequently. It is also important to realize that, as singers, we are storytellers and communicators of the human experience, so understanding and internalizing the text is an integral part of our work together. I care deeply that my students feel respected, safe, and comfortable in exploring their vocal abilities, and it brings me great joy to help them achieve their goals.

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