

Emily Merrell

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Education

MM in Jazz Performance

University of North Texas, 2012

Graduating GPA – 4.0

BM in Jazz Studies

University of North Texas, 2010

Minor in Music Theory

Graduating GPA – 3.953

Private Jazz Voice Lessons with Rosana Eckert: August 2008 – May 2012

Private Composition and Arranging Lessons with Rich DeRosa: August 2011 – May 2012

Private Classical Voice Lessons with Derek Chester, Monica Boldt, Jennifer Youngs: August 2005 – May 2012

Jazz Ensemble Direction under Paris Rutherford: August 2008 – August 2009

Jazz Ensemble Direction under Steve Wiest: May 2010 – August 2010

University Teaching Experience

Adjunct Instructor – Commercial Music

Commercial Music Department, Utah Valley University, August 2020 – Present

- Teach private voice lessons to commercial music majors.

Adjunct Instructor – Commercial Music

Commercial Music Division, Brigham Young University, August 2015 – May 2019

- Program and direct BYU Jazz Voices: 10-12 vocalists (men and women), and rhythm section (piano, bass, drums, guitar). Repertoire selected from only the highest quality arrangers, and features a wide variety of jazz-subgenres including swing, Latin, bebop, funk, fusion, and modern jazz hybrids. All students participate as ensemble members, and as improvising soloists. In addition to two “on-campus” performances per semester, BYU Jazz Voices perform frequently for “off-campus” events.
- Taught private contemporary voice lessons to pre-music majors, and instrumental music majors.

Adjunct Instructor – Contemporary Voice

Department of Music, Utah Valley University, August 2014 – May 2015

- Present weekly lectures to vocalists in the commercial music department
- Design lectures focusing on extra-vocal skills including communicating with instrumentalists, developing skills as a bandleader, building a professional reputation, understanding the role of each band member, assembling a gig book, making lead sheets, designing set lists and programs, understanding mic technique, equipment usage and live sound setup, improving stage presence, building skills in improvisation, applying theory in real-world contexts, making the most of practice time, and experimenting with impromptu arranging

Graduate Teaching Fellow – Vocal Jazz Faculty

Department of Jazz Studies, University of North Texas, May 2010 – May 2012

- Taught private jazz voice lessons to undergraduates in jazz studies, and to graduate students outside of the jazz department
- Served on the faculty panel for end-of-semester juries
- Served on the faculty audition panel for admission into the jazz studies department, and for scholarship consideration
- Assisted in preparing guest-artist accommodations and schedules, organizing department-wide student events, setting up live sound and running sound check for weekly student recitals with up to 10-piece accompanying ensembles, gathering information from alumni, and myriad other department projects

Graduate Teaching Fellow – Jazz Ensemble Director

Department of Jazz Studies, University of North Texas, May 2010 – May 2012

- UNT Jazz Singers II (SSATB, 12 member advanced vocal jazz ensemble and 5 piece rhythm section)
- UNT Jazz Singers IV (SSA, 10 member beginning vocal jazz ensemble and 4 piece rhythm section)
 - Selected appropriate and challenging repertoire for ensembles
 - Rehearsed both vocalists and instrumental rhythm sections without supervision or involvement from full-time faculty
 - Set up full sound equipment for each rehearsal, and for all concerts
 - Accompanied vocalists during sectionals
 - Effectively prepared ensembles (including graduate jazz studies majors, undergraduate jazz studies majors, non-jazz music majors, and non-music majors) to perform a full hour (UNT Jazz Singers II) or 30 minutes (UNT Jazz Singers IV) of challenging repertoire during each end-of-semester concert
 - Prepared programs and advertising materials for concerts
 - Conducted vocalists and instrumentalists during concerts
 - Served on faculty panel for all vocal ensemble auditions

Graduate Teaching Fellow – Classroom Instructor

Department of Jazz Studies, University of North Texas, May 2010 – May 2012

- Taught and developed curriculum for a sight-singing class designed specifically for beginning jazz vocalists
- Prepared and delivered weekly lectures on various sight-singing strategies and obstacles
- Designed and administered weekly sight-singing tests
- Prepared students for more effective and successful ensemble auditions

Studio Teaching Experience

EM Songwriting Course:

Online course featuring an original, self-developed method for teaching and understanding songwriting. Absolutely no prior music training is required. The course is fully self-contained, and an excellent fit for precocious beginners, or experienced composers who are looking for new strategies. Specifically, the course is nine modules organized by big-picture concepts and topics, with fifty-nine total lessons breaking down everything from melody structure, to chord theory, to lyric development. Each lesson is delivered in a carefully scripted video, ensuring the absolute most efficient and thorough delivery of information and concepts. Altogether, the course comes in at twelve total hours of concentrated, self-guided video instruction.

Emily Merrell Vocal Studio in Lehi, Utah (Owner, Manager, and Instructor): August 2012 – Present

Expertise includes beginning to advanced vocal technique and styling (Jazz, R&B, Pop, Rock, Indie, Broadway, Singer-Songwriter), piano for vocalists (self-accompaniment), songwriting and composition (Jazz, Pop, Folk), arranging (small group, vocal ensemble, larger instrumental jazz ensemble), sight-singing, music theory, improvisation/ad lib, ear training, systematic repertoire development, concepts in character development for the musical actor, and stage presence for contemporary vocalists. Experience working with ages ranging from 4 – 75.

Students of Emily Merrell Vocal Studio perform in up to six annual concerts including professional-level “cover band” showcases (Pop, R&B, Country, and Rock) with an eight-piece live band (including harmonized background vocals), and full stage/sound setup; “dinner concerts” (Folk, Singer-Songwriter, Jazz, Indie, Alternative) during which students recreate a restaurant-type performance—often accompanying themselves on the piano, and/or performing original music co-written during their regular lessons; and traditional recitals featuring Broadway and Classical repertoire performed with piano accompaniment.

Advanced Private Voice/Piano/Composition Instructor at Utah Conservatory in Park City, Utah:
August 2012 – December 2013

Senior Instructor (Voice/Piano/Composition) at Neighborhood Arts and Music School in Frisco, TX: June 2010 – August 2012

Private Voice Instructor for Central Junior High School in Euless, TX: April 2011 – August 2012

Additional Teaching and Leadership Experience

Regional Consultant/Booking Agent for International Musicians League: February 2015 – Present

- Booking agent, lead vocalist, and manager for the Diamond Empire Band in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Reno, Nevada. International Musicians League Consultants work to process new leads in their respective regions, design custom quotes for prospective customers, turn prospective customers into committed clients, and organize music and musicians for the every part of the client’s event. A wedding, for example, would typically include ceremony music, cocktail hour music, and several hours dance music. The lead vocalist is responsible for leading and rehearsing the band, programming music for each portion of an event, setting up and running the live sound system, providing DJ services during breaks, and serving as Master of Ceremonies and client liaison.

Clinician at Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival: February 2020

ACDA-Utah Conference Manager: March 2015 – Present

- Oversee and direct planning for ACDA-Utah’s annual statewide conferences.

ACDA National Convention “Little Theater” Chair: February 2015

- Coordinate volunteers and artist accommodations for all vocal jazz events at the 2015 ACDA National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Thumbtack Pro Mentor: November 2014 – 2016.

- Selected as one of Thumbtack’s most successful professionals to advise new business owners about how to use Thumbtack as an effective tool for business growth and branding. Meet regularly with customer service representatives at Thumbtack’s Utah office to present the professional’s perspective, and lead discussions about improving customer service for Thumbtack nationwide.

Audition Panel Member for Caleb Chapman’s Soundhouse Auditions: 2014-2016

Clinician at Salt Lake City International Jazz Festival: July 2014

Instructor at ACDA/University of Utah Vocal Jazz Workshop at University of Utah: September 2013

Instructor of Musicianship/Theory for Vocalists at Utah Conservatory in Park City, Utah: August 2012 – December 2013

Director of EM A Cappella at Emily Merrell Vocal Studio (SSAA, 6 member vocal ensemble): January 2013 – Present

Director of EM Summer Glee Workshop (music day camp, students ages 6-12): July 2013

Instructor of NAMS-Cappella Workshop (a cappella vocal group, 6 students ages 8-16 – original curriculum): June 2011

Instructor of NAMS Master Classes (Ages 5-10 – original curriculum, various topics): Semi-annually June 2010 – August 2012

Founder and member of Payawarú (Female vocal-sextet specializing in jazz-influenced Columbian music): January 2012 – Present

UNT Student Faculty Administrative Responsibilities, under direction of Jennifer Barnes: August 2011 – August 2012

UNT Eagle Ambassador: May 2008 – August 2010

- UNT Eagle Ambassadors are an elite group of student leaders hand-picked by university administrators based on academics, extra-curricular activities, leadership skills, natural ease of communication, and excellent self-presentation. Eagle Ambassadors represent the student body in university outreach and recruiting events, media promotion, and at exclusive events with the university board of directors, dean, and donors. Eagle Ambassadors receive extensive training and experience in public speaking and formal event etiquette.

Honors, Awards, and Scholarships

Downbeat Magazine Student Music Award, Original Composition “Ondine’s Dance”: 2013

Downbeat Magazine Outstanding Performance, Latin Group (Payawarú): 2013

Jazz Education Network International Student Composition Showcase Award “Secret”: 2012

Downbeat Magazine Student Music Award, Jazz Arrangement “Where is Love”: 2010

Winner of American Sabor Youth Contest (Latino Battle of the Bands) with Payawarú, \$5000: 2012

Masters/Doctoral Fellowship Award, Tuition, Fees, and \$12,000 annually: August 2010 – August 2012

- The Masters/Doctoral Fellowship Award is the largest scholarship awarded by the university to any graduate student. Competition for limited total scholarships is among all UNT graduate students, not just music students. Mine was the first, and has been the only scholarship of its kind awarded by the University of North Texas to a student in the department of jazz studies.

Eagle Ambassador Scholarship, \$2,500 per year: August 2008 – August 2010

Dean’s Camerata Scholarship, UNT College of Music, \$500 per semester: August 2008 – May 2010

University of North Texas Academic Scholarship, \$1,025 per semester: August 2008 – May 2010

Discography

“Masks” – Producer, Composer, Arranger, Vocalist: May 2020

“Zagranitsa: Mystical Wonderland” (Q’d Up - BYU Jazz Faculty) – Guest Artist: September 2019

“Maybe Love” (Dan Tate, Composer, Pianist) – Featured Artist: March 2019

“Acover” (Drew Danburry) – Guest Artist: August 2016

“Embark” – Producer, Sole Composer, Arranger and Vocalist: October 2012

“The Cost of Living” – Soprano in UNT Jazz Singers I, under direction of Paris Rutherford: May 2009

- Other: Selected Recordings Upon Request for Traditional Jazz Repertoire, Pop, Rock, and R&B Repertoire, Classical Repertoire, Broadway Repertoire, VoxBox Repertoire and Payawarú Repertoire

Selected Performances

Jazz Education Network Conference: Professional Vocalist Category, Original Music: January 2018
Lead Vocalist and Manager for Utah Diamond Empire Band: February 2014 – Present
Director for BYU Jazz Voices at the Scera, Provo, Utah: January 2015
Music Video Shoot for “Missing”: December, 2015
Director for BYU Jazz Voices at ACDA Utah State Conference: September 2015
Excellence in the Community Concert with “Q’d Up,” Covey Center: September 2015
Emily Merrell Group at Whysound, Logan, Utah: August, 2015
Excellence in the Community Concert with Emily Merrell Group, Gallivan Center: July 2015
Performance of Emily Merrell Group at Summerfest, Logan, Utah: June 2015
Performance of Emily Merrell Group at Utah Arts Festival, Salt Lake City: June 2015
Backup Vocalist for Ben Folds with the Utah Symphony at Deer Valley Music Festival: August, 2014
Featured Artist at Salt Lake City International Jazz Festival: July, 2014
Guest Vocalist with Wasatch Jazz Project, Excellence in the Community, Viridian Center: August, 2014
Guest Artist with “Q’d Up,” Brigham Young University Jazz Faculty Ensemble, Madsen Recital Hall: January 2014
Guest Artist with Ray Smith Quartet, Excellence in the Community, Viridian Center: May 2014
Utah Live Bands: April 2014 – Present
Excellence in the Community Concert with Jay Lawrence Sextet, Gallivan Center: October 2013
Performance with Spank Pocket at Benny Golson Jazz Festival, Snow College: July 2013
Performance of Emily Merrell Group at Utah Arts Festival, Salt Lake City: June 2013
Solo Loop Pedal Performance at Con Brio Music Festival, Park City: May 2013
Regular Performances with Diamond Empire Cover Band: February 2014 – Present
Regular Performances with Utah Live Bands: June 2013 - Present
Regular Performances as a solo vocalist/pianist at Grand America Hotel: February 2013 – Present
Regular Performances with Jazz and Blues SLC: January 2014 - Present
Jazz Education Network Composers Showcase Performance with members of The Alan Baylock Jazz Orchestra: January 2012
Featured Artist at Denton Arts and Jazz Festival: April, 2012
Performance at Jazz on the Square with Payawarú: March, 2012
Featured Soloist and Soprano in UNT Jazz Singers I: August, 2008 – May 2011
Headliner at Paris Rutherford Celebration Concert with UNT Jazz Singers I: April, 2009
Headliner at Midwest Clinic in Chicago with UNT Jazz Singers I: December, 2008

Pro Bono

ACDA Utah Jazz Repertoire and Standards Chair: January 2014 – Present
Judge for Utah State Distinguished Young Woman Program: October 2014 (40+ hours)
Instructor, Content Developer, Co-Chair, and University of Utah Liaison for ACDA/University of Utah Vocal Jazz Workshop: September 2013 (100+ hours)
Pianist at Rocky Mountain Home Care-Hospice – Murray, Utah: September 2012 – Present
Church Choir Director: September 2012 – Present

Professional Associations

American Choral Directors Association: January 2014 - Present
Jazz Education Network: January 2011 - Present

References

University of North Texas Faculty and Staff:

Paris Rutherford, Founder and Former UNT Director of Vocal Jazz Studies: paris.rutherford@verizon.net
Jennifer Barnes, Current UNT Director of Vocal Jazz Studies: jennifer.barnes@unt.edu
Rosana Eckert, UNT Vocal Jazz Educator and Active DFW Artist: rosanaeckert@gmail.com
Richard DeRosa, UNT Composition/Arranging Professor and Active DFW Artist: richard.derosa@unt.edu
Michael Steinel, UNT Professor of Jazz Studies, Author, and Active DFW Artist: michael.steinel@unt.edu
Dr. John P. Murphy, UNT Director of Jazz Studies: john.murphy@unt.edu
Dr. Jeffrey Snider, UNT Classical Vocal Studies Chair and Active Operatic Baritone: jeffrey.snider@unt.edu
Carol Pollard, UNT Academic Music Advisor: carol.pollard@unt.edu
Jennifer McLendon, UNT Director of Eagle Ambassadors: jennifer.mclendon@unt.edu

Professional References:

Curtis Brink: Partner and Regional Consultant at International Musicians League, Diamond Empire Band:
Curtis.brink@gmail.com
Ron Saltmarsh: Division Coordinator of Commercial Music at Brigham Young University:
ron_saltmarsh@byu.edu
Camille Kingman-Killpack: Choral Director at Orem Jr. High School, President of ACDA-UT:
Camille.kingman@gmail.com
Reed Criddle: Director of Choral Activities at Utah Valley University: reed.criddle@uvu.edu
Jean Applonie: Professor of Music in Choral Conducting & Ensembles at Brigham Young University:
jean_applonie@byu.edu
Bob Parr: Internationally acclaimed record producer, Dallas, TX: musicwind73@aol.com

Former Employers:

Debra Lynn Cook, Founder, Managing Director, and Head of Voice at Utah Conservatory, Park City, Utah,
vocalcook@gmail.com
Aaron Mitchell, Founder and Faculty Director of Utah Conservatory, Park City, Utah,
utahconservatory@gmail.com
Matt Gaskins, Owner of NAMS in Frisco, Texas: musicschool380@yahoo.com, www.namsfrisco.com
Lorelai Cole, Director of Choral Programs at North Richland Middle School: lorelaicole@tx.rr.com