

## **Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Collaborative Pianists**

Drafted July 2012 and revised August 2017 for inclusion in the OSU Music Department Student Handbook

The collaborative pianists/accompanists of Oklahoma State University:

1. share equal responsibilities and rewards for performance;
2. deserve the same respect and recognition for artistry as those with whom they collaborate;
3. have the right to express their opinions, and likewise should accept constructive suggestions graciously;
4. must be given sufficient advance notice for recital performances and pre-recital hearings (*at least 6 weeks*) by singers and instrumentalists with whom they collaborate, as the piano parts are typically as difficult to play as the soloists' parts;
5. must be provided with scores *at least 2 weeks (for shorter vocal works) or 6 weeks (for longer instrumental works)* prior to performances, including those on Student Recital Hours, juries, and recitals/pre-recital hearings;
6. shall begin all rehearsals and lessons at the agreed upon time, with any cancellations being confirmed at least 24 hours in advance, unless extenuating circumstances (such as health emergencies) arise;
7. must have a clear understanding of the extent of their commitment at the beginning of a working relationship;
8. must make themselves available to those with whom they've agreed to partner for appropriately spaced rehearsals, within the parameters of the agreement made by both parties at the outset of the partnership;
9. will agree, preferably in writing, upon all financial remuneration for their work before any practice or rehearsal is undertaken;
10. will join their partners in ensuring that everyone is sufficiently prepared at the *first* rehearsal of any repertoire;
11. will support their musical partners and expect the same in return.

A lack of planning on the soloist's part does not constitute an emergency on the part of the pianist. Similarly, a lack of preparation on the pianist's part must never create an emergency for the soloist. The following minimum advance preparation times are meant to serve as a guideline. *The time allotted should be increased for more difficult works, especially for longer instrumental works.*

All **rehearsals** should be arranged **48-72 hours** in advance. **Lessons** should be arranged **one week** in advance. **Performances** in such venues as studio classes, master classes and Student Recital Hours should be arranged *at least two weeks* in advance, and **six weeks** in advance for particularly complex or lengthy works. As mentioned above, **recitals** and **recital hearings** require at least 6 weeks advance notice.

It is imperative, for the good of all performers involved, that collaborative works be coached in lessons **at least twice** before any public performance.

## **Additional Information Regarding Collaborative Pianists at OSU**

OSU employs two Collaborative Pianists to perform with a number of instrumental and vocal students each year, and in addition a portion of one of the piano faculty position workloads includes

collaborations with students, faculty members and guest artists. The University does not employ a Collaborative Piano professor or a vocal coach, and does not offer graduate degrees in collaborative piano or a block of graduate assistantships in that concentration. Therefore a portion of OSU instrumental and vocal majors must hire their own pianists for lessons and performances. While this is an unfortunate situation, it is by no means unique to OSU. This is *not* the fault of the piano students or the piano faculty. The piano majors at this institution, as at any other, cannot shoulder the burden caused by the lack of the necessary piano faculty positions and assistantships mentioned above. Doing so would greatly compromise the integrity of piano students' own educations. Collaborating is but one vital component of any pianist's education.

Financial arrangements for collaborations are made between those involved in a "free market" manner. Pianists with greater experience and expertise will likely charge more, while others will charge less as they learn the extremely complex and advanced skills associated with accompanying. At OSU, the majority of student collaborative pianists/accompanists are studying at the undergraduate level, while ideally most accompanying would be carried out, under the careful supervision of a Collaborative Piano professor, by master's and doctoral students. Even the finest pianists will need several years of experience and intensive training to become proficient collaborators. Freshman pianists entering any music program usually have little experience collaborating, though they've typically taken 8-14 years of lessons before beginning their bachelor's degrees. OSU piano students hone these advanced collaborative skills largely "on the job" because the bachelor's degree piano major's curriculum only includes a one-semester course in that area of expertise, plus 1-2 semesters of Duo or Chamber Piano courses that are required of piano performance majors.

While vocal and instrumental students will ideally choose with whom they would like to work, OSU piano majors will not be able to play in all studios during their study here. After their first semester, all piano majors on scholarship are required to accompany at least two singers or instrumentalists each semester. This is a standard requirement at music schools across the nation, and reflects the fact that the piano parts in collaborative settings are often as difficult as those of the soloist. While pianists serve music programs greatly in this way, they are not to be viewed as servants to their classmates. All efforts are made to ensure that those who are performing degree recitals will be given first priority in the search for accompanists when a pianist is sought out at least a semester in advance of the recital. Because time is limited, it is natural that pianists will most often choose to gravitate toward repertoire that is most appealing and will expose them to the finer works in the collaborative repertoire, i.e. works they *must* be acquainted with as part of their education as pianists. They are encouraged to play works written for instruments not typically considered "solo" instruments, but they must budget their time carefully in that regard.

If the amount of practice time necessary to play a given student's repertoire is more than a pianist can spare within the context of their broader studies, they may reasonably decline playing for that student. Pianists will gravitate toward studios or ensembles where they receive the most constructive comments, so they may grow as musicians through the rewarding experience of collaborating with other fine musicians, and where they feel that their work is appropriately respected and appreciated. If they feel abused, they will rightly avoid that situation.

Students should not only know their parts, but should bring an open-minded attitude to rehearsals, with all persons taking equal ownership in the music making. Pianists are encouraged never to undertake more accompanying than they can play well, and to be sure that their presence in lessons and rehearsals enhances the soloist's experience. All pianists are also encouraged to bring particularly problematic or difficult accompaniments to their lessons as time allows, so that their applied teachers may offer some assistance on this important repertoire.

Since OSU piano majors cannot possibly cover all departmental performances, the Keyboard Area posts and distributes a Collaborative Pianist List each year, which is also available on the departmental website. This list includes contact information and a brief description of credentials regarding those students and others in the community who are available for collaborations. Piano faculty members are always willing to make recommendations as well.