



School of the Arts (SOTA) 2020-2021 Faculty Biographies & Schedules



Hannah Allen (Voice/Piano) Hannah has been studying voice classically since the age of 17, though her passion for music and vocal performance began long before then. Her musical education began on the piano, which she studied for 11 years. Along with her piano studies, she had extensive experience singing in choirs including the TPSMEA All State Choir, as well as in musical theater productions. After deciding to pursue voice, she was accepted to Gordon College and was awarded the Friends of Music Scholarship and The Grant Music Scholarship for Christian character. She has studied with Courtney Huffman-Frye, Metropolitan Opera soprano Katherine Whyte, and Grammy Award winner Kevin McMillan. Hannah has toured across the country with the Gordon College choir, directed by Dr. Jamie Hillman. In addition to her passion for art song and choral music, she has extensive chamber experience, and continues to perform in musicals. Recent performances include Helena Landless in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and Amalia in *She Loves Me*.



Sarah Allen (Piano) holds a BM in composition from Samford University where she studied composition with Dr. Mark Lackey and piano with Dr. Kathryn Fouse. Sarah was also a member of the Samford University A Cappella Choir. She was fortunate to be able to tour with the choir and participate in Lithuania's Siauliai Cantat, where the choir won first prize. Sarah also competed in the Morris Piano Competition in her junior year at Samford. Having studied piano for most of her life, Sarah has a passion for education. Music has been life changing for Sarah, and she strives to share her passion for music with the next generation.



Julia Brandenburg (Violin/Viola/Beginning Cello) is the new CCA Strings Director for students in grades 5-12. She grew up in Warwick, Rhode Island and began playing the violin at the age of five. She earned a Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance at the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University. In 2016, Julia relocated to Dallas to pursue graduate studies at Southern Methodist University where she received a Master of Music and a Performer Diploma in Violin Performance. Julia is an active performer and is a member of the Plano Symphony Orchestra, Irving Symphony Orchestra and Dallas Chamber Symphony as well as frequent guest at national and international music festivals. She is an Education Outreach Musician for the Plano Symphony Orchestra and for the past 5 years has directed school programs and taught privately. Julia is passionate about passing her love of performing on to the next generation of musicians.



Amye Derix Carrington (Piano) is originally from Irving, Texas, and holds a Bachelor of Music in Music Theory and a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from Baylor University. After college, she relocated to Houston where she sang with the Houston Grand Opera Chorus, Houston Bach Society, served as staff soloist/section leader in two area churches, and taught general music and voice lessons in the public school system. She moved to North Carolina and served as Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church in Marion for four years, and was an adjunct music teacher at McDowell Technical Community College. Upon her return to Texas in 2008, she became the Director of Music for Covenant Presbyterian Church in Sherman, where she continues to serve, and she teaches adjunct music classes and voice lessons at Collin College. Amye's vocal, keyboard, and conducting skills allow her to work with a variety of students of differing skill levels, from beginning piano and voice students to members of an adult choir. She wants each person that she works with to be the best musician that he or she can be, and she strives for excellence in providing the foundations of musical training needed for future development of these skills.

Steve Dowdy (Guitar/Drums/Piano) is a multi-faceted musician and an accomplished guitarist and pianist with experience ranging from playing in Rock, Country and Jazz bands to being featured on multiple recording albums. He is a graduate of TCU where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and he serves on the Praise Team at Center Point Church where he plays Keyboards, Bass, Electric and Acoustic Guitar. He has over 10 years of teaching experience.



Ben Skrabanek (Guitar/Ukulele) began studying guitar in 2009 at McLennan Community College. After earning his Associate's degree, he transferred to the University of Texas at Arlington where he went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Jazz Performance. In December 2020, he completed his Master's degree in Jazz Composition at UTA. He has received multiple awards for guitar performance and composition, including the MCC Outstanding Student Awards for both Performance and Songwriting, the Bill Snodgrass and Daniel Burkholder Awards for Jazz Performance at UTA, and the Songwriting Award for an original ballad performed at the Greeley Jazz Festival in Colorado. Ben has studied guitar with Ken Frazier, Pat McKee, and Clark Nauert in Waco, and also with Sam Walker and Chris DeRose at UT Arlington. He is also an accomplished

harmonica player, having studied for two years with Ruby McCray in Hallsburg, Texas. He is fluent in the styles of rock, singer-songwriter, and jazz. Ben plays regularly at The Crossing Church in Grand Prairie, as well as with the Dave Pell Redux group and other jazz groups in DFW. Ben has been teaching guitar for two years privately, and began teaching at Covenant Christian Academy in September 2019.



Lisa Schreiber (Piano) provides instruction for beginning students. She grew up studying the piano and completed her Elementary Education/Music Education degree at Hardin-Simmons University. Before becoming a kindergarten teacher at CCA, Lisa taught for several years from her own home piano studio. Lisa is grateful for the opportunity once again to share her love of the piano with young children.

Faculty Schedules

Hannah Allen (voice/piano)	Wed, Thurs 3:15 - 6:00
Sarah Allen (piano)	Mon, Wed 3:15 - 6:30
Julia Brandenburg (Strings)	Tues, Wed, Thurs 3:15-6:00
Amye Carrington (Piano)	Mon 3:15- 5:00
Steve Dowdy (Drums, Guitar)	Tues, Wed 3:15- 6:00
Lisa Schreiber (Piano)	Tue 3:15-4:45; Wed, Thurs 3:15 – 5:45
Ben Skrabanek (Guitar/Ukulele)	Tues, Thurs 3:15-6:00 and Fri 1:30-6:00