Noelle McMurtry

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Noelle McMurtry (DMA, PKL) has established herself as a versatile vocalist, researcher, concert curator, and musicologist, who employs her interdisciplinary background in service of inclusive storytelling. She engages with genre bending music-theater projects that explore diverse feminist perspectives to question and recontextualize the canon. Over the past decade, Noelle has interpreted vocal repertoire spanning the medieval era until today in art song, opera, new music, and historical performance genres. She currently resides in Washington, DC with her partner Kevin and dog Cashew.

Noelle's approach to her musical projects centers around a single question: ***what contributions by historic and living women creators in classical music can we uncover?*** Through archival research, scholarship, and performance, Noelle brings historically overlooked vocal repertoire to audiences. By engaging with narratives around the "forgotten" women of classical music, she creates a performance environment where the voices of women from the past mingle with women from the present. As a proponent of building community through collaboration, Noelle is supported in this ongoing work by musicians, scholars, and granting arts organizations, who recognize the urgent need for a classical music landscape that centers the vocal repertoire of women composers. Reviving the missing chapters of music history, Noelle invites a communal reimagining of what we, as musicians and audiences, have been told about women creators in classical music.

In May 2023, Noelle received a Doctor in Musical Arts (DMA) in Voice with a joint Master's in Musicology from Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. She was elected to the Epsilon Omicron Chapter of the Society of Pi Kappa Lambda in recognition of her musical and academic achievements. Noelle was also awarded the George Castelle Memorial Award in Voice and the Irving Lowens Endowed Memorial Prize in Musicology.

Noelle's research focuses on the song repertoire of 19th-century European and North American women composers, as well as philosophies of embodied vocal performance in classical music. In 2020, she was awarded the Presser Graduate Award from The Presser Foundation to pursue archival research in Berlin, Munich, and Karlsruhe for her DMA lecture recital on the published Lieder of German composer Luise Adolpha Le Beau (1850-1927). From 2024 to 2025, Noelle will be a Max Kade Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies at the Freie Universität in Berlin. As a Max Kade Fellow, she will both expand her research on the Lieder of Le Beau and revise her DMA thesis into a monograph.

In July 2022, Noelle also launched *She Is Song*, a blog and Substack newsletter to further share her research and writing about the song contributions of women composers in classical music. Since 2018, Noelle has also employed her skills as an arts administrator, researcher, dramaturg, and collaborative producer with The Pleiades Project (NYC), MUSE Festival (NYC), IN Series (DC), and Boulanger Initiative (DC).

Art Song

Since 2015, Noelle has collaborated with The Cantanti Project (NYC), MUSE Festival (NYC), The Pleaides Project (NYC), and IN Series (DC) to curate and perform in recital programs that explore the vocal repertoire of women composers. With her extensive knowledge of song repertoire, particularly from the 19th Century, Noelle prioritizes the unexpected and historically unheard, juxtaposing repertoire from the medieval era to the present day. Recent examples include: *The Shining Place*, a 2022 filmed recital at St. Thomas' Parish (DC) with pianist Michael Sheppard featuring works by modern American composers Margaret Bonds, Eve Beglarian, Missy Mazzoli, and Lee Hoiby.

Opera

Noelle's operatic interests encompass both ends of the historical spectrum, and she specializes in Baroque and 20th- to 21st-century operatic repertoire. Highlights of her operatic credits include: Calisto in Cavalli's *La Calisto*, Drusilla in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Papagena in *The Magic Flute*, and Despina in *Così fan tutte*. In the 2022-2023 season, Noelle was a soloist in REQUIEM with IN Series (DC), an experimental opera combining Mozart's *Requiem* with music by French composer Lili Boulanger and Québécois composer Claude Vivier. In 2020, she debuted with IN Series (DC) as Polyxo in Kate Soper's *Here Be Sirens*, and she also performed the title role in Kaija Saariaho's monodrama *Émilie* with Now Hear This.

New Music

Noelle engages with the extended technical challenges of new music repertoire and its emphasis on contemporary storytelling. To that end, she has coached with new music specialists Ah Young Hong and Tony Arnold. Highlights of recent performances include: Kate Soper's virtuosic *Only the words themselves mean what they say* with flutist Christian Paquette at The Kennedy Center, Christopher Cerrone's *I will learn to love a person* with pianist Eunchan Kim on the Friday Noon Series, Kaija Saariaho's *Leino Songs* with pianist Jack Dou, *Short Gems: In/Out of the Canyon* by Jessica Krash with New Alliance for Music-Theatre (DC), as well as concert and recorded versions of Scott Ordway's *North Woods* for treble octet.

Historical Performance

Drawn to the drama, complexity, and emotion of Baroque repertoire, Noelle has coached with historical performance specialists Drew Minter, Ellen Hargis, Lisa Saffer, Paul O'Dette, Richard Stone, and Mark Cudek. She was a member of the Young Artist Program at The Boston Early Music Festival in Handel's *Almira* and participated in the Baroque Vocal Program at the Vancouver Early Music Festival. Highlights of recent performances include: the biblical cantatas of Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre with harpsichordist Paula Maust, Barbara Strozzi's *E giungerà pur mai, Op. 8* with lutenist Cameron Welke, and Comtessa de Dia's medieval monody *A chantar m'er de so qu'eu no volria* with medieval harpist Alix Evans.