

Collaborative Pianist Program 2025-2026 Guidelines

GENERAL INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The Collaborative Pianist Program provides a pianist as an asset to applied voice study at Rider University. Everyone who takes applied voice lessons for credit will be automatically billed each semester according to the credit(s) registered, and will receive an assigned pianist for lessons and weekly coaching.

This program is a unique system among all the music schools in the United States. Most of the schools provide a pianist for voice lessons, but students do not get a pianist to rehearse weekly. Moreover, our staff pianists are all specialized in working with singers, and will be able to provide additional support for your education.

Although participation in this program is not required, and you are able to opt out by submitting an opt-out form within the designated period in each semester, it is strongly encouraged to stay enrolled in it.

Private Coaching for Credit

If you are interested in additional private coaching for credit, the following faculty members are available. The credits will be treated as additional applied lesson credit, and you will be charged additionally (1 credit = \$600, 2 credits = \$1200). To register for private coaching, you need to contact the teacher first.

Dramatic Coaching (Classical, Musical Theater)

Prof. Carolann Page

Private Coaching for Musical Theater Repertoire

Prof. Louis Goldberg

Prof. Michael Bond

Private Coaching for Classical Repertoire

Although all teachers coach both opera and art song repertoire, the specific interest is indicated.

Prof. Susan Ashbaker (Opera)

Dr. Akiko Hosaki (Art Song, Diction)

Dr. Martin Néron (Art Song, Diction)

FEES

- ACCOMPANIST FEE FOR 1-CREDIT LESSON \$325: It will cover 7 hours of accompanying. Typically, your pianist will play for weekly lessons for 15 minutes and have a 20-minutes coaching weekly. It may be possible to have the pianist alternate between playing for lessons for 30 minutes and having a 40-minutes coaching each week, with authorization by the coordinator.
- ACCOMPANIST FEE FOR 2-CREDITS LESSON \$650: It will cover 14 hours of accompanying. Typically, your pianist will play for weekly lessons for 30 minutes and meet for coaching for 40 minutes weekly.

Please note:

- 1) After the hours covered by the fees are completed, exceeding hours for lessons or coaching will be charged to the student at the rate of \$40 per hour. You must pay the pianist directly.
 - 2) All Westminster students and MT students are charged Voice Program Fee which is now an academic program fee and not refundable as it covers many singing related elements throughout various courses. Studio Class Fee is no longer billed.
- AUDITIONS: NO ADDITIONAL COST.
 - JURIES: NO ADDITIONAL COST, as long as you are enrolled in the Collaborative Pianist Program and you pass the juries according to your degree plan. If you opt out from the program, you must pay a pianist \$30 directly to play for your jury. If you need to re-take a jury, you will also need to pay an additional fee of \$30.
 - DEGREE RECITAL FEES (WCC): You must register for your degree recital(s) for the semester you are planning to schedule it. The fee will be automatically added when you register for the recital. If you need to postpone the recital to the following semester, you will receive "incomplete" and will not be charged the recital fee twice.
 - 1) Performance Major Junior Recital = \$250
Please register for VC 001R.
 - 2) Non- Performance Major Senior Recital (Music Ed, BAM, Comp/Theory) = \$250
Please register for VC 001R.
 - 3) Performance Major Senior Recital and Graduate Recital = \$275
Please register for VC 002R.

OPT-OUT FORM

If you would like to opt-out from the Collaborative Pianist Program, you must submit the opt-out form online by the deadline (usually the ADD CLASS DEADLINE) each semester. The link will be sent to the voice teachers, and everyone can get it at the beginning of the semester. After the form is processed, the Accompanist Fee will be refunded after the add/drop period.

If you plan to work privately with one of the pianists who work for the program, please know that the pianists are obligated to take the assignments through the program before any private arrangements because they are bound by the contract. As a result, you might not be able to work with your desired pianist.

MAKE-UP POLICIES

- Students' absences or cancellations – for any reason, including illness – will not be made-up by the pianist. It will be indicated on the pianist's record.
- Lesson cancellations by the student or the teacher – for any reason, including illness – will not be made-up by the pianist, and the pianist is not obligated to attend a make-up lesson. The lesson cancellation will be indicated on the record. The pianist is also not obligated to meet the student during the lesson time when the teacher cancels the lesson.
Note: If a teacher cancels a lesson and would like for the pianist to meet with the student during the designated lesson time, the pianist will add the time towards the required plan hours, as well as 30 minutes of lesson cancellation.
- Any pianist cancellations must be made-up. If a pianist misses a lesson, it can be made up by having an additional coaching or going to a make-up lesson.
- In the event of a university closing (e.g., inclement weather), or when an official excused absence results in a missed lesson or coaching, the pianist is not obligated to make up the time. However, the pianist is encouraged to replace the time, as schedules permit.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The success of this program is dependent upon a professional attitude and mutual responsibility on the part of both students and pianists. Professionalism is about qualities and behaviors we exhibit, and involves being reliable, respectful, responsible for our own actions, and striving to become experts to the field we choose.

Student's Responsibilities

- Please communicate with your teacher to schedule your lesson by/within the first week of the classes each semester. If you would like to have a certain pianist assigned to you, you must discuss with the teacher and the pianist, and reserve a mutual time for your lesson in advance.
- Please communicate with the pianist closely, especially at the beginning of the semester. If there is a delay to start working with the assigned pianist due to the student's reluctance to respond, the hour(s) missed might still be counted towards the required plan hours after an investigation.
- You must give the music to the pianist in advance of any lessons or coaching. Pianists do not have access to printers on campus. It is recommended to prepare two (2) folders of the music, and give one to your assigned pianist, and use another one for the Studio Class and any other performing classes. You may send a PDF electronically if the pianist prefers using a tablet.
- You must notify the pianist of any cancellations of lessons or coaching, whether the cancellation was caused by you or the teacher.
- You are responsible to pay any additional fees to the pianist after the required plan hours are finished.
- FYI, here are the Teacher's Responsibilities and Pianist's Responsibilities:
 - **Teacher's Responsibilities:**
 - 1) Please communicate with your students and the pianists before or by the first week of the classes in each semester if you would like to pre-arrange certain lesson times. All the pre-arrangements must be made by THE DAY BEFORE the deadline for the Pianist Request Form, which is the pre-arrangement deadline. Please STOP seeking a pianist and contacting the pianists after that deadline, and indicate the rest as the regular requests.
 - 2) Please submit the pianist request form for each student, including those who are NOT participating in the program, by the DEADLINE FOR THE PIANIST REQUEST FORM. Please know that the process for assigning pianists will not start until all teachers submit the request form. And wrong information or incomplete information will result in a delay of completion of the entire pianist assignments.
 - 3) If there is any concern or problem occurs between you and the pianist, please contact the coordinator as soon as possible. It will be preferable to resolve issues by discussion, rather than changing the pianist assignment – it may be impossible to change the assignment during the school year.

- **Pianist's Responsibilities:**

- 1) Pianists should give their availability to the teachers and the students before the semester starts, to make pre-arrangements by the pre-arrangement deadline, which is the day before the pianist request form deadline. After then, the pianists should not respond to any inquiry for taking a student.
- 2) Pianists are responsible to keep accurate and complete records of work with each student accurately.
- 3) When pianists need to cancel a rehearsal or lesson, they must notify the student(s), the teacher, and the coordinator.
- 4) Pianists are responsible to know the repertoire well for coaching.

EVALUATIONS

Students are encouraged to contact the coordinator anytime when a question arises during the semester. At the end of each academic year, all students and voice faculty members will be asked to complete an online survey including an evaluation of the assigned pianist.

PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS OCCURRING BETWEEN STUDENT AND PIANIST DURING THE SEMESTER

Students experiencing problems or having concerns with the assigned pianist should contact the coordinator, who, in collaboration with the department chair of performance studies at WCC and/or the musical theater voice coordinator, will act as a mediator to solve any problems. If a student's pianist is the coordinator, the student should speak to the department chair of performance studies at WCC.

The coordinator will communicate with all the parties, and see if the issue could be worked out with the best efforts on both sides.

Please note:

- 1) Changing pianists during the semester might not be possible due to the payroll, billing, and scheduling issues. However, if it is determined that a change is necessary during the semester, the coordinator and the administration will try to find a solution. See the next section of this document for more information.
- 2) If a student would like to change the assigned pianist for the following semester, the student should speak to the applied teacher, who will discuss with the coordinator and request a different pianist at the beginning of the new semester.

PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING A PIANIST

1. First, the applied teacher should schedule the student's lesson time. The applied teacher **MUST** discuss with the student whether or not the student is making or would like to make a pre-arrangement with a certain pianist.

NOTE: This program encourages to form a supporting team for each student. Therefore, please plan to collaborate with the same pianist as much as possible. If there is any unsolvable problem and you (the teacher and/or the student) would like to change a pianist, you are encouraged to report it to the coordinator. When you are making a pre-arrangement, please contact the staff pianists to check their availability to coordinate a student's lesson time while scheduling lessons until the day before the deadline for the pianist request form, or submission of the pianist requests if the submission is before the deadline for the pianist request form. After the submission of the requests, teachers/students should not seek an available pianist on their own.

2. On the request form, it must be indicated if there is a pre-arrangement agreed by the pianist (including an assignment continued from a previous semester or a newly agreed arrangement; both are considered as 'pre-arrangement'). If there is no agreement confirmed, the coordinator will assign a suitable pianist based on the lesson time.

NOTE: Pre-arrangements are recognized **ONLY** if the pianist submits the exact same information as the teacher submits on the pianist request form (student's name, lesson time). If the information does not match, it will **NOT** be considered as "pre-arrangement," and will be treated as a regular request. Pre-arrangements are processed first, and regular requests after pre-arrangement requests, however, all assignments are **NOT FINAL** until the coordinator publishes the assignment list.

3. If a student decides to opt out from the program, the student must submit the opt-out form by the add class deadline. After this deadline, no refund will be made even if the student withdraws from the program voluntarily.

Opt-Out Form Deadline

Fall 2025: Tuesday September 9, 11:59pm

Spring 2026: Friday January 30, 11:59pm

4. Teachers must submit the requests during the designated period. Please submit the form by the requested date for all the students in your studio.

Fall 2025 Pianist Request Form Deadline

Deadline to make pre-arrangements: Wednesday September 10

Deadline to submit the Pianist Request Form: Thursday September 11

Spring 2026 Pianist Request Form Deadline

Deadline to make pre-arrangements: Thursday January 29

Deadline to submit the Pianist Request Form: Friday January 30

TEACHERS PLEASE READ:

It is very important for all the teachers to submit the pianist requests in time, and that all the information be accurate. Inaccurate information or uninformed changes will delay the entire process. There is NO DIFFERENCE if the teacher submits the requests early or later, if it is within the designated period. All the assignments are arranged based on the information. In other words, assigning pianists cannot begin until all the requests are received. If a teacher does not submit the requests by the deadline, please know that it will make a significant delay on completing the assignments, moreover, the entire workload for each pianist may be affected.

5. The coordinator makes the pianist assignments and completes the assignment list. The pianists will be informed first and confirm the schedule. Teachers and students will be notified via email later, within three to four days of the deadline for the pianist requests.
6. When the pianist contacts the students, students should respond as soon as possible to schedule weekly coaching time.
7. If students find that availability/schedule will not work out with the assigned pianist, the coordinator must be informed immediately to change the assignment before the change deadline.

Deadline for Assignment Change Request

Fall 2025: Thursday September 18, 12pm

Spring 2026: Thursday February 5, 12pm

REFUND POLICIES

- If a student would like to opt out from the program but does not submit the opt-out form for Accompanist Fees by the deadline, no refund will be made.
- If a problem occurs on the assignment during the semester and the situation does not improve regardless all the efforts made, the coordinator and the administration will investigate and discuss the issues. It may result in changing a pianist or dropping the assignment; however, the student will not receive a refund.
- If a student withdraws from the program in the middle of the semester, no refund will be made.
- If a student is not assigned a pianist due to schedule and/or pianist's availability issues, the coordinator will submit the request for a refund to the administration on behalf of the student. If the administration grants the request, the refund will be made.

VIRTUAL LESSONS and SUMMER/J-TERM LESSONS

Students in Masters of Voice Pedagogy are allowed to take virtual lessons during the regular semesters; thus, they may opt out from Collaborative Pianist Program and may receive a refund the Accompanist Fee. However, the opt-out form must be submitted to receive the refund (it will not happen automatically).

Students who take voice lessons during Summer Sessions will not be charged Accompanist Fees as there is no pianist assignments nor Studio Class offered. Voice lessons are not offered during J-term.

– CONTACT INFORMATION –

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Professor Margaret Cusack, Chair, Department of Performance Studies: mcusack@rider.edu

Dr. Sean McCarther, Musical Theater Voice Coordinator: smccarther@rider.edu