MPPM 420 Pop Strings

SPRING 2023, Tuesday 8pm - 9:50 pm in Schoenfeld (AES 138A)

Faculty: Ginny Luke

E-mail: vluke@usc.edu
Office Hours: Flexible (by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION
Welcome to Pop Strings Ensemble! This class will study the art of pop strings from many different perspectives and styles. You will apply the lessons through performance on your instrument and in a variety of written worksheets that will enhance performance on your instrument. All lessons, exercises, and activities will be built around tunes that are commonly known in the popular styles of pop, rock, country, bluegrass, latin, and jazz repertoire.

OUTCOMES
The most important skills for a pop musician to have are a great ear, improvisational skills and an understanding of pop styles. As a pop player you MUST know the language of each style, and this language is found in the tunes that makeup the repertoire. We will focus on various styles over the course of the semester. We will study the melody, form, and harmony of the songs in these styles. We will apply principles of music (jazz and classical) theory, history, performance practice, and instrumental technique (some classical, some new or alternative!) to maximize our understanding of these styles.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED:

1) Pop string sound production, phrasing and stylistic nuance
2) Ear-training
3) Improvisation
4) Rapid transcription of harmonies and solos (for studio and live work)
5) Sight-reading with stylistic accuracy and "on-the-spot" decision making
6) Writing for small groups (2-6 strings)
7) Contemporary bowing techniques: Chugging, chucking, swing, double shuffle
8) Groove and rhythmic pocket
9) Comping patterns
10) Identifying keys and chord changes
11) Identifying pop song form
12) Common roles in pop/alternative string ensembles

REQUIRED MATERIALS
- String instrument (pickup or mic if you own)
- Metronome app
- Tuner app
- Amazing Slow Downer app
- GoogleDrive
- Dropbox
- Music manuscript book or paper for note taking and transcription
- Internet (for attending class and submitting assignments)
- iPad or tablet for sheet music. If student doesn't own, a black binder

Your instrument & iPad or binder must be brought to every class.

ADDITIONAL TECHNOLOGY/MATERIALS (optional)
- Piano or electronic keyboard

- If using a midi controller, then you will need a USB cable and a computer capable of running GarageBand, Logic, or any other software program/DAW (there are free programs available, such as <u>GarageBand</u> for Mac and <u>ProTools First</u> for Windows/Mac).

- Logic, Ableton (free trails available)
- Audiomovers (free software, link will be sent out)
- Interface, microphone, cables, mic stand.

Two packages Focusrite offers USC students (not required): They both include an interface, microphone, mic cable, mic clip, and headphones. You would need to purchase a mic stand (and pop filter if you sing) separately.

Focusrite/Novation "studio" bundles (Edu 25% off retail rate):

   Focusrite Solo Studio (3rd Gen): $169.99 with Edu discount (includes interface (1 input, 1 preamp), mic cable, mic, mic clip, and headphones)

   Focusrite 2i2 Studio (3rd Gen): $202.49 with Edu discount (includes interface (2 inputs, 2 preamps), mic cable, mic, mic clip, and headphones)

USC-Focusrite/Novation purchase link: https://store.focusrite.com/en-gb/offers/usc-student-faculty-discount

For further information on Audio and MIDI Equipment Purchase Options for USC Thornton Studentsand FacultySoftware and Hardware contact Ginny for PDF of information.

NOTE: All course materials (lesson documents, worksheets, sheet music, etc.) will be distributed via our main GoogleDrive folder, link will be sent out.

You will be graded on the following:
**   1) Play-tests & applying concepts to recording – rhythm, intonation, stylistic accuracy, listening skills.**

**   2) Communication with fellow students and with me. ASK QUESTIONS & SCHEDULE YOUR REHEARSALS & RECORDINGS EFFECTIVELY.**

**   3) Musicianship: Playing accuracy, participation in improvisation & alternative styles, intonation, groove, blend with ensemble.**

**   4) Audio/Musical preparation: Organized audio files (playlist or GoogleDrive folder), utilizing metronome, Amazing Slow Downer app and transcription accuracy. Performing and turning in audio recordings on time.**

**   4) Mid-Term and Technique Finals, Final Performance.**

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	0-59

Online Student Folder: All items must have a <u>descriptive title titled PopStrings_YourLastName_Week 1_Assignment</u> (ex. "PopStrings_Luke_Week1_Scales"… NOT "187423087_823.mp4"). Please organize these in sub-folders (ex. "Week 1", "Week 2", etc.) within your Pop Strings "Student Portfolio" Folder

Documents, written homework, career responses - 10% of grade

Recorded Assignments & Videos - 20% of grade
This consists of recorded assignments (19% of grade) and videos (1% of grade)

Midterm Playtest: 17.5% of grade

Creative Project: Arrangement/Performance: 15% of grade; Demonstrating the skills learned in class, prepared independently

Technique/Groove Final demonstrated in repertoire excerpts: 17.5% of grade

Showcase Performance and/or Final Recording - Final: 20% of grade

WEEK 1 – Introduction + Stand By Me
Excerpt: Don't Stop Til You Get Enough
Ear training: Melody, Guitar Part, Keys

Jan 10
Career Reflections + Goals for the year
Solo improv or song recording reflecting style

WEEK 2 – Playtest Stand By Me + Career Reflections
Review recordings
Excerpt: Ain't No Mountain High Enough

Jan 17
Billie Jean, September

WEEK 3 – Billie Jean, September, Stand By Me
Jan 24
Levitating

WEEK 4 – Playtest Billie Jean, September
Excerpt: You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman

Jan 31
Sweet Child of Mine, Crazy On You

WEEK 5 – Playtest or record:
Stand By Me, Billie Jean, September, Sweet Child, Crazy On You

Mar 7
Pastime Paradise

WEEK 6 – Pastime Paradise rehearsal
Excerpt: Stayin Alive
Mar 14
Take the A Train

WEEK 7 – Take the A Train, Pastime Paradise rehearsal
Review/Play in class: Stand By Me, Billie Jean, September, Sweet Child, Crazy On You

Mar 21
Kashmir

WEEK 8 – MID TERM PLAYTESTING
Apr 4

April 7th: 7pm-9pm, soundcheck time TBD
Prepare for Showcase THURSDAY APRIL 7th

WEEK 9 – A Train, Pastime Paradise, Crazy On You, No Tears Left to Cry, Kashmir

Apr 11

WEEK 10 - Electric strings & Effects

Apr 18

WEEK 11 – Rehearse with Latin Pop, Pastime Paradise, guest speaker and ensemble coach Professor Jae Deal

Apr 25
Students create own arrangement with Jae Deal Cohort OR collaborate with Latin Pop

WEEK 12 - Rehearse and RECORD selection(s) from: Pastime Paradise, Kashmir, Levitating, Take the A Train, Moment, Stand By Me. Rehearse with live band. Review student arrangements with Jae Deal cohort or Latin Pop. Rehearse and RECORD best Pop String Ensemble selections, any other overdubs from Latin Pop

May 2

WEEK 13 – Review recorded selections, guest artist.

May 9
Performance and Course Evaluations

Pop Strings Final Performance is April 7th

The Final Performance serves as the Final Exam.

ADDITIONAL INFO

1. Weekly Practice/Establishing Daily Work Habits – For this class (and all classes), *you get exactly what you put in.* While there's no one-size-fits-all practice regimen, what counts most is QUALITY and CONSISTENCY. Depending on your practice goals for the day, your session times may vary.

   I strongly encourage you to practice on a regular basis. These skills in articulation, musical connection, groove, bebop/blues scales, improvisational skills and awareness of styles on aren't built overnight; we can't get fluent in these styles a day before a final. With consistent practice and LISTENING, you will see dramatic improvement. The exams and assignments reflect a semester's worth of work and steady commitment. Be thoughtful about your time management and stay on track with weekly assignments and class expectations.

2. Attendance and Participation – We're going to cover a LOT of material and styles this semester, so attending each class is crucial. The best way to make the most of this class is to participate. Learning pop string styles isn't a passive task... put these concepts to practice and ask questions! If you are in a time-zone that makes attendance impractical, then please let me know right away (USC defines reasonable learning hours as anytime between 7 am-10 pm in your local time zone). I will work with you to make sure you get the education and the interaction you need.

   i) While you're not required to schedule office hours with me, I *highly,* **highly** encourage you to do so. I am always happy to answer any questions you might have, whether during class or outside of class! If you're having any difficulty or would like any clarification, please don't hesitate to reach out!

3. Absences/Make-Ups – There is no "attendance grade" for this class; don't let this fool you… your participation is a vital component of your learning, and this will be reflected in your assignments and exams. If, for some reason, you *absolutely* need to miss class, **PLEASE EMAIL ME BEFOREHAND** (NOT 20 minutes before class… communication is a valuable skill). All lesson materials and other documents will be available in the main Google Drive folder. Unless our regular class time falls outside reasonable local learning hours (as described above), I expect you to be present for all synchronous class sessions. Otherwise, it will be *your sole responsibility* to review the lectures and course material, and to **reach out for any further clarification**.

4. Homework Policy - *Late Homework (Documents, Audio and Videos)*: 10 percentage points are deducted for each calendar day that an assignment is late.

5. Class Format/Audio & Video Assignments – Audio and video assignments must be completed AND SUCCESSFULLY UPLOADED before class; these are critical, as they allow me to deliver personalized feedback. When applicable, video assignments will have 'scaled' options for various difficulty levels (for those who want to take the concepts further or those who simply want a challenge).

What You Can Expect from Me:
- You have my respect
- I am here to help you, whether during class or outside of class; I want you to thrive, I want to help you establish a high level career as a pop string player, and if that isn't your end goal, to nurture your interest in pop strings and immerse you in these styles and musical history.
- If something doesn't make sense, please ask me to clarify!

What I Expect from You:
- Your respect
- Arrive to class on time, be ready to learn with an open mind, and ask questions! Tell me about your goals and tell me what you hope to get out of this class.
- Turn in your assignments on time and recognize these assignments are to prepare you to get jobs and be a major part of the music industry. If you have a request to study something, tell me!

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. Please do not share or otherwise distribute class materials, music scores or recordings produced by me or any students in the conduct of this course without expressed permission.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

> *Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code.*

This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (SeeSection C.1 Class Notes Policy).

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/ SCAMPUS/gov/. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at http:// www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS.

STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP (https://dsp.usc.edu/) and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) dspfrontdesk@usc.edu.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/COURSE CONTINUITY IN A CRISIS

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

USC technology rental program

We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program or other assistance. To apply, please submit an application on the Student Basic Needs portal.

USC Technology Support Links

Zoom information for students
Blackboard help for students
Software available to USC Campus

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Each student is accorded a right to free speech and expression, but language should respect our academic setting and diverse cohort. Though they may be common in contemporary music, epithets and slang rooted in racial, gender and sexual identity should be recognized as contextual to the individual who chooses to use them. Language that intentionally diminishes others based upon race, gender, sexual identity or other protected groups is not tolerated.

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dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086 eeotix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298 usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776 osas.usc.edu
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710 campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101 diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC) ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-3340 or otfp@med.usc.edu chan.usc.edu/otfp

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.