



“Beyond the Screen:  
disAbilities and the Arts”  
series presented by:



St. John's College UBC  
聖 約 翰 學 院



a place of mind  
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Access & Diversity

For more information on this workshop and all  
events in this series, please contact:

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*Parking is available at the West Parkade  
directly across the street from the College.*

## *Learning Music with a Learning Disability: Gifts and Challenges*

➤ This workshop is a part of the “Beyond the  
Screen: disAbilities and the Arts” series at  
the University of British Columbia



Sunday, March 10, 2013

2:30—5:30 PM

Fairmont Social Lounge

St. John's College UBC

2111 Lower Mall

**To register for this free workshop:**

<http://stjohns.ubc.ca/2013/01/disability-and-the-arts>

While our findings emerge primarily from our current research with learning-disabled opera singers, the educational strategies and principles we discuss can be equally useful in supporting instrumental music students and other students with learning disabled musicians “see” when they look at a score, and how can instructors help make score-



reading a gateway rather than a barrier to musical success?

First, we explore how remarkably gifted young opera singers who are also learning disabled cope and succeed in a program that is

artistically prestigious and academically rigorous, requiring them to synthesize vocal, linguistic, music and text reading, mathematical, aural, spatial, and dramatic abilities.

Through interactive exercises, participants will experience some of these challenges for themselves. What is it like to perform while simultaneously moving around a stage, remembering music and words, coordinating movements with other onstage performers, and paying attention to a conductor? What do dyslexic musicians “see” when they look at a score, and how can instructors help make score-reading a gateway rather than a barrier to musical success?

Finally, we discuss recent research suggesting that learning disabilities such as dyslexia may be a by-product of unrecognized strengths in other cognitive tasks, and how instructors can recruit these hidden strengths to help students overcome their challenges and fully realize their gifts.

Be prepared to participate!

## FACILITATORS

### Professor Nancy Hermiston

Canadian-born lyric coloratura Nancy Hermiston has performed throughout Europe and North America. Parallel to her extensive singing career, Miss Hermiston worked as voice teacher, stage director, and Co-coordinator with the University of Toronto’s Opera and Performance Divisions. In 1995 she joined the University of British Columbia’s School of Music as the Head of the Voice and Opera Divisions, where she established the UBC Opera Ensemble.

In 2004 Prof. Hermiston was named the UBC University Marshal. In 2008 UBC awarded her the Dorothy Somerset Award for Performance and Development in the Visual and Performing Arts. She was also honoured with a Killam Teaching prize in 2010. In 2011 she was awarded the prestigious Rubie Award by Opera Canada. Miss Hermiston is also a favourite guest for master classes throughout Canada, China and Germany. Her UBC Opera Ensemble tours regularly to the Czech Republic, Germany, Ontario and throughout British Columbia.

### Dr. Laurel Parsons

Dr. Parsons has taught aural skills and music theory at Queen’s University, the University of Oregon, UBC, and Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Prior to completing her Ph.D. in Music Theory at UBC, she worked as a private piano and theory teacher, vocal coach, collaborative pianist and harpsichordist for many years.

Her avid interest in musical neuroscience led to her completion of a Certificate of Training from the Robert F. Unkefer Academy of Neurologic Music Therapy at Colorado State University. In recent years she has had the privilege of tutoring gifted learning-disabled musicians privately in aural skills and sight-singing.

### Dr. Marion Porath

Dr. Porath is a Professor of Educational Psychology and Special Education at The University of British Columbia, with a concentration on the development and education of highly able learners. She was awarded the Killam Teaching Prize in 1998.

She is the author of numerous articles, chapters, and books and has received grants to study artistic, narrative, and social giftedness; gifted and gifted/learning disabled students’ understanding of their own learning; the co-occurrence of operatic giftedness and learning disabilities; and adolescent and adult development of highly intellectually gifted learners.

