

inter nos

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INDEPENDENT VOICES

Art Sticks Better to Dirty Windows

by Cynthia Vaughn, Associate Editor for Independent Voices

Inspiration comes when and how you least expect it. Last December, I learned a great life and business lesson from a local window sign painter. I had seen artist Alicia Michaliszyn's handiwork on some other small business windows around town and admired her skill, colors, and bold designs. With our studio parking lot empty due to COVID business restrictions, our commercial building looked closed even though we were open for online lessons. So, I hired Alicia to paint the studio's large arched picture windows that face a busy intersection.



Cynthia Vaughn
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We discussed a design and scheduled a start date. I was very busy with end-of-semester deadlines and the approaching holidays, so when the sign painter arrived, I apologized profusely. "I'm so sorry. The windows are really dirty and the guy who usually cleans them has gone out of business due to COVID, and I didn't have time to clean the windows myself." The artist replied, "Oh, no! Dirty is better. You need something for the art to stick to. Clean windows take longer to paint, and Windex is the worst. The paint slides right off!"

I thought about how many times I'd waited to begin a creative project because it wasn't the exact right time, or I didn't have every strategic detail completely

(continued on page 4)



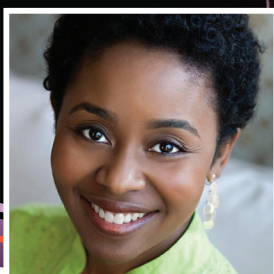
Magnolia Music Studio's newly painted windows.

2021 NATS SUMMER WORKSHOP

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Featured Presenters



Marcía Porter

*Professor of Voice
Florida State University*

**Sounds of the Soul:
Art Songs of Black
Women Composers**



Natalie Douglas

*Independent Teacher
& David Sabella
Master Teacher in
Musical Theater & CCM*

**Amplifying
BIPOC Voices in
American Song**



**LeOui Janse van
Rensburg**

*Doctoral student
Royal Academy of Music
in London*

**An Introduction to
Afrikaans Art Song
Afrikaans Diction Workshop**



Mutsumi Moteki

*Professor of Vocal Coaching
University of Colorado Boulder
& Kumiko Shimizu
Professor of Music & Collaborative
Pianist, Delta State University*

**Introduction to
Japanese Art Songs**

And many more, including...

- **Randi Marrazzo and Nicole Leone:** From Cloisters to the Salon: Revealing the Strong-Willed Women in 24 Italian Songs & Arias by Women Composers
- **Gisele Pires Mota:** Brazilian Art Song: Diction, Repertoire, and Performance
- **David Sabella and Marilyn Lester:** Exploring the Great African-American Songbook

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Start with dirty windows and paint something beautiful.

ready and planned out. My art slid right off, and I never even started. If the pandemic has taught me anything, it is how to be in the moment and how to find imperfect ways forward in the most challenging times. Perfectionism is elusive and as slippery as name-brand window cleaner. There is no perfect time. Pursuing perfection will only take you longer, add to your frustration, and you may simply abandon your book, your song, your idea, or your career path. When you are feeling frustrated and overwhelmed, instead of giving up, what if you start with dirty windows and paint something beautiful anyway?

*Cynthia Vaughn teaches voice at Magnolia Music Studio in Richland, Washington, which is the multi-teacher studio she originally founded in Fort Collins, Colorado, in 2008. She formerly served on the voice faculties of Colorado State University and Cedarville University. She was selected as a Master Teacher for the 2020 NATS Intern Program, which has been postponed to May 2021 due to the pandemic. Cynthia Vaughn and the late Meribeth Dayme, PhD, co-authored *The Singing Book*, a leading class voice textbook/anthology.*



Artist Alicia Michaliszyn creates colorful, bold window designs.

Stories

Our stories matter. Do you have a dirty window story? A time you faced unexpected challenges and you worked with what you had at the moment or adapted to change?

Share your story with me or on our NATS Members-Only Facebook page.

Call for Submissions

Short articles on relevant topics are being accepted for inclusion in the independent teacher section of future issues of *Inter Nos*. Submissions should be sent by email to CynthiaVaughn@mac.com.