

## What's in a Name?

By Cynthia Vaughn

**Y**our independent studio name can reveal a lot about who you are as a teacher and what kind of culture you are creating for your students. NATS *Inter Nos* invited eight independent studio teachers to tell us about their unique and creative studio names.



**Studio Name:** Rare Bird Studios LLC

**Website:** [rarebirdstudios.com](http://rarebirdstudios.com)

**Teacher:** Leischen Moore

**Logo Design:** bilalhaider23 at [Fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com)

Rare Bird Studios was created from a rebrand in the fall of 2018. At the time, I was looking to find a business name that not only encapsulated myself as a human and artist but also spoke to the personalities of my clientele. The name of my studio needed to be much greater than myself, but rather a place where my ideal clients could see themselves from the name out. After a hair-pulling six months of experimenting with different names, a Trader Joe's birthday card showed up on my doorstep from a life-long friend. This card showed a beautiful Art Deco bird that said "You Are A Rare Bird." In that instant, the name of the studio had flown in on birthday wings. I knew the name was perfect because I didn't care one bit what anyone else thought of it. The definition of a rare bird so beautifully shares the spirit of our studio, "an exceptional individual or unique person." In this studio, we believe we are all exceptional and unique, and with that core belief, it is our job to search solely for our singer's own sound and creative spirit.



**Studio Name:** True Colors Voice & Artist Coaching

**Website:** [truecolorsvoiceandartist.com](http://truecolorsvoiceandartist.com)

**Teacher:** Jessica Baldwin

**Logo Design:** Sara Alway-Rosenstock / [justAjar Design Press](https://www.justajar.com)

I chose True Colors as the studio name because I'm here to help people be more vibrant, expressive versions of themselves . . . to be works of art who create works of art. Self-expression and connection are the primary values of the business, and my services include creativity/artist coaching as well as voice work. My clientele is primarily singers who are (or want to be) original artists, or who are trying to figure out their artist identity. I serve many classically trained singers who realized classical music wasn't their passion and who need support as they develop a sound and an identity that is more true for them as an individual. I asked logo designer Sara Alway-Rosenstock of justAjar Design Press to incorporate inspiration from CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black), the primary colors of printing, because I wanted to represent the concept that I'm just sharing tools with my clients. They are the artists. She ran with that concept and took inspiration from Bradbury Thompson, a mid-century graphic designer who often used pure CMYK in his designs.



**Studio Name:** Radiant Voice Studio

**Website:** [radiantvoicestudio.com](http://radiantvoicestudio.com)

**Teacher:** Mary McMurtery, Owner & Holistic Voice Instructor

**Logo Design:** Angela Winter [awakenedcreator.com](https://www.awakenedcreator.com)

The name for my studio wasn't on my radar AT ALL. My last name isn't the easiest for folks to spell and pronounce, so I wanted something that would both be easier for people and would resonate with who I am and the energy I want to put into the world. Should be easy enough, right? Nope! I agonized over it to the point where I was stuck and frozen in place, unable to move forward with clarity and focus, and I needed help. I reached out to my friend, Angela Winter, whose work I'd seen in branding and website design, and had been extremely impressed with. We started with a branding consultation to get the ideas flowing, which was really fun. Several design elements started to come together that I was really excited about, but I still didn't have the clarity I needed in my studio name. Angela suggested that

we meet over Zoom to go through some visualization and meditation together, and see what might come through.

Angela took me through a Martha Beck exercise, called *The Body Compass*. It's easier to experience than to explain, but the exercise basically helped me to feel how I resonated with each of the ideas I brought, on a scale from -10 to +10, which Angela made note of for me. Then she led me through several visualization prompts, helping me to imagine how I want my clients to feel through our work together in my studio, which was a really beautiful experience. Afterwards, she asked me to describe what images and feelings came up, and as I was struggling to try to explain it to her, I said, "I don't know, it's kind of like warm, sunny energy moving from within outwards in all directions, like this spherical ripple effect, it's like this radiant energy—" at which point Angela gasped, and our eyes got big, and we were like, "That's it!!" It was perhaps an unconventional way to come up with a studio name, but I am so grateful for Angela's expertise and help! Once it came out of my mouth, I just felt it, and knew I was home. The most amazing thing was that it completely made sense with all the design elements we'd already been working on in the logo, like everything finally snapped into focus! It's an amazing feeling when your branding truly represents who you are and serves as a beacon to the clients you feel called to work with in the world.



**Studio Name:** Fat Joy Voice

**Website:** [fatjoyvoice.com](http://fatjoyvoice.com)

**Teacher:** Kate Rosen

**Logo Design:** Kate Rosen

Are you a singer who has felt held back by antiquated ideas about which bodies belong onstage? Have you played every mom, sea witch, and maid in the canon, even though that doesn't line up with your dream theatrical journey? Fat Joy Voice is a new kind of voice studio — for fat people, by a fat person. Designed with you in mind, with fat community at the heart. All online, so you can connect from anywhere in the world, with body-affirming voice lessons to help you connect with the art you are meant to make. We will focus on the repertoire that you dream about, whether that's Disney Princesses, Bobby, Roxie and Velma, Seymour, Dot — the most important thing is that, wherever we go together, it's the direction you truly want. You deserve to connect with your instrument — that's your body — in a way that celebrates and affirms you. Filling up a space with the power of your voice is a healing practice for folks in fat bodies who have been encouraged to shrink. Here, we expand.



**MAGNOLIA**  
MUSIC STUDIO

**Studio Name:** Magnolia Music Studio LLC

**Website:** [MagnoliaMusicStudio.com](http://MagnoliaMusicStudio.com)

**Teacher:** Cynthia Vaughn

**Logo Design:** [Shane Miles Design](#)

Magnolia Music Studio has grown far beyond a one-room basement studio on Magnolia Street in Fort Collins, Colorado in 2008. When I left Colorado in the summer of 2014 to join my husband in Richland, Washington, I brought Magnolia with me. In part, it was pragmatism. I already had a studio name, custom logo, and website. In other ways, it was the spirit of Magnolia that I was carrying with me. Magnolia means "dignity and perseverance" in the Victorian language of flowers, and its use has long been associated with healing and breath in Eastern medicine. Magnolias are extremely hardy trees and, though commonly associated with the Southern United States, you can find magnolias in nearly every state and gardening zone. In fact, with the first spring blooms after I moved to Richland, I discovered two gorgeous magnolia trees in my own backyard.

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**Studio Name:** Mezzoid Voice Studio LLC  
**Website:** [mezzoidvoicestudio.com](http://mezzoidvoicestudio.com)  
**Teacher:** Christine Thomas-O'Meally  
**Logo Design:** Christine Thomas-O'Meally realized by Jo Isom

What IS a Mezzoid? It's me. Back when I sang at the National Shrine in DC as part of the professional choir, my director, the late Leo Nestor, said to my section, "Altoids, let's try that again." My response was, "Excuse me, I happen to be a mezzoid." He said "what's the difference?" and I replied, I'm still curiously strong. I just happen to sing a minor third higher." (Cue music nerd laughter here.) It became a thing. I decided it would be my email handle, and then later my website name, and now, my studio name. There are even a few people who call me Mezzoid. A select few call me Zoid. (FYI: You have to have my permission to do that.)



**Studio Name:** Perennial Voice Studio  
**Website:** [perennialvoice.com](http://perennialvoice.com)  
**Teacher:** Jessica Walch  
**Logo Design:** [Good+Ready Design Co.](http://Good+Ready Design Co.)

My studio name was inspired by the ideas of growth, renewal, and deep-rooted transformation. I also drew inspiration from my experiences gardening and my appreciation for beautiful gardens and the joy they bring! I considered a few different gardening-related names but this was the one I kept coming back to and felt the most right.



**Studio Name:** Sand Dollar Music  
**Website:** [sanddollarmusic.com](http://sanddollarmusic.com)  
**Teacher/Co-Founder:** Christin Coffee Rondeau  
**Logo Design By:** Christin (rebrand by a professional currently underway!)

In 2014, I found myself in a crisis of purpose. I was an exhausted Air Force spouse far from friends or family, lonely beyond words, with two babies under age two. A burned-out, bitter singer-teacher who felt like a has-been at the distinguished old age of 29. In that desert, both literal and metaphorical, I couldn't even *listen* to music because I missed making it and teaching it so badly. The ache for creative expression was agonizing. So, sleep-deprived and sad, my family took a short trip to the beach. I packed up my 6-week-old in the Ergo carrier and walked out to a sandbar in the shallow waves. As I walked and she slept, I ruminated on my life. Why wasn't I singing? Would I ever sing again? Would anyone care either way? And as I walked and wondered, I heard a voice, clear as chiaroscuro, say, "Ask me for something." I jumped, looking around for the source of the voice, but there was no one. Just me, the baby, and the waves. I kept walking. Then heard the exact same command again. Was it . . . God? Anxious and awkward, I said something like, "OK, God . . . Maybe this is you? I don't know . . . but . . . ok, I'll play. Here's my question: If I'll ever have music in my life again, if I'll ever *be* a musician again, let me find a sand dollar." The

beach was nothing but broken shells and cigarette butts, so it was a ridiculous request. I kept walking. And then my toe . . . hit something. Cradling the baby's head with one hand, I reached under the waves to pick up the thing with my other. And, of course, you've guessed what I fished up from that water. A sand dollar. Incredulous, I said, "Ok, fine. But it *is* the ocean, so that *could* just happen. Got another?" and kept walking. A few more steps. I stepped on something. Another sand dollar. I kept walking. Another sand dollar. And another. And another. Every step led me to another sand dollar, and once there were too many to hold, too many to fit in the tiny pocket of the baby carrier, too many to fit down that ridiculous nursing tankini, I finally believed. The Lord of Creation — the ultimate Creator, the benevolent Artist — had heard me and shown me, once and for all, that I was not alone. My situation didn't change that day, but my perspective certainly did. So when, in 2017, halfway across the country, I was given the opportunity to co-create a music studio with a dear friend, "Sand Dollar Music" was the obvious choice. It serves as a reminder about the God who sees, cares, loves, and provides . . . even while we're whining in the waves.

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