

## Why I'll Never Do Another Student Recital

How the KLVS Showcase Experience has transformed my teaching and my studio

by Kim Lamoureux

**I**t was three years ago, in the early spring, and I was out for a walk on the bike path near my house to clear my head in the middle of a busy day of lessons and admin tasks.

I had been thinking a lot about the shape that my work in my recently-transitioned-to adults-only voice studio had been taking. I had been hosting traditional general recitals for my studio twice a year for nearly a decade at this point ... and it just wasn't feeling aligned anymore.

Sure, I mused, recitals could be a great opportunity to "show what you know," and they were certainly motivating for the singers in my studio. My clients appreciated having a tangible goal to work toward, and they genuinely valued the sense of community these gatherings fostered — something that can be hard to find as an adult pursuing music outside of a professional track.

Still, I found that the traditional studio recital format posed some consistent challenges for my clients. Preparing intensively for just one or two songs often placed a lot of pressure on singers. While that worked well for some, more found the high-stakes nature of a single moment on stage to be quite daunting. This often led to a perfectionistic mindset, preparation anxiety, and, too often, the end result of this combination was a performance that my students couldn't help but be disappointed with.

Was this model really the best way to serve my clients' growth? There had to be a better way — something that kept the sense of purpose and community, but allowed for more creative expression, deeper growth, and a more positive performance experience overall.

As I walked, my thoughts floated. I knew that my current students were ready for more, vocally and artistically, and that I had a real opportunity in front of me to push the growth edge of their confidence. It came to me that what I really wanted for my studio community was a performance experience that would be more than a general recital.

I thought, *we should do a long-form performance.*

It was on this walk that the idea for the KLVS Showcase Experience was born.



Kim Lamoureux

In that first season, I invited my studio members to dream up a concept and curate a set of 10-20 minutes of solo vocal music. The sky was the limit in terms of theme, genre, shaping, and style. Each student chose songs and themes that were uniquely relevant to them, and we worked over a period of about four months to develop, hone, and prepare their sets.

The inaugural Showcase Series proved to be a huge success, and the wins were innumerable — increased confidence, joy, ownership, exploration, stamina, artistic self-realization, self-trust, and more.

We are now three years into this grand experiment, which has turned out to be the only vocal capstone event I will ever do with my adult singers.

Why?

Recitals can be fun, rewarding, or even chill, in the right circumstances.

But, more often — *it's so much pressure, for so little reward.*

And it perpetuates both the master/apprentice model, and the culture of striving for perfection in music.

Now, I'm all about quality results, but perfection is a myth. What do you remember when you see a great performance? The flaws, the mistakes, the flubs? No. If you even noticed those imperfections in the first place (debatable) — you remember the *impact*. How you felt in that moment. How the artist on stage moved you.

Our industry (especially if you're coming from a classical background, as I am) has historically been way too focused on getting it right at the expense of all else.

What if instead, we could focus on getting it *real*? Being in the moment? Having all that skill and confidence and technique to back you up, *so that you are free to communicate in an extended moment through the music that you love*?

This is what the Showcase has done for the singers in my studio community. I'll never go back to traditional recitals.

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And for the singers who are now returning for their second or third Showcase performance? They are now offering more songs, exploring new genres, expanding their vocal range, and creating even more cohesively themed programs. It's a joy to witness and be a part of this growth with them.

If you're burned out or feeling uninspired by the traditional studio recital model — there are other options available to you! Long-form performance opportunities allow your students the ability to create a project that is personal and meaningful to them, and gives them time in the main event to settle in to (and maybe even enjoy!) their performance — and that can't help but expand their ability to communicate and connect with an audience.

To get started with a long-form performance opportunity in your studio, consider the following:

- Who do you serve?
  - Do you work with kids and teens? Adults? College students? Are they pro track or hobby singers? Wherever your clients fall on this spectrum will determine how much scaffolding and/or handholding they will require to prepare for an event of this nature.
- How much runway do you need?
  - Based on the above, you may need anywhere from 2-6 months to prepare your students adequately. Plan accordingly.
- What's your pay structure?
  - An event like this is a high-ticket item! If you're already on a tuition or subscription model, will you spread the fees across an existing payment plan? Will you charge a one-time fee that covers the event? Or, do you want to create a separate program altogether that is all-inclusive for everything that goes into this performance experience?
- What's your venue?
  - In my opinion, one of the non-negotiable key factors of this kind of event is that it doesn't happen in a church.



Sarah, Miranda, and Stephanie take a bow after their first Showcase performance.



Alison draws the audience in during her Showcase "Songs of Chapter 3".

Now, I'm not knocking churches. They have great acoustics, typically have a good piano, and are usually happy to rent out their space. However, no matter how you slice it, there's an intrinsic air of formality that is inherent in these spaces. Your goal with a show like this is to encourage intimate communication — and a church space is just not the vibe. Instead, look into the non-traditional venues in your area:

- Is there a small black box theater? A coffee shop? A local jam space? Maybe you're interested in an outdoor performance with a gazebo setup. The sky's the limit in terms of location. Think outside the box!
- Who will you hire/what will you rent?
  - Would you like your students to work with a pianist? A guitarist? A band? Will you accompany them? (not recommended, as there are many other elements for





The author, mixing lights and sound during a Showcase performance.



Sarah belts out a showstopping note during her Showcase "Retro Mixtape".



Chris takes us to Ireland with highlights from "Celtic Spells".



Building community—Kim with several members of her studio community attending a Studio Showcase event.



Joanne brings Broadway to the black box in her one-woman show, "Music To Remember".



Neva performs "Times Are Hard For Dreamers".

you to attend to as the producer of this event — but you do you!) What's your sound setup? Who's running that? Will you have lighting? Are you livestreaming or recording?

There's more to consider, but this is a good starting point.

If you're curious about what an event like this could look like in your studio, feel free to check out some of the Showcases I've produced on my YouTube channel: [youtube.com/@kimlamoureuxvoice](https://www.youtube.com/@kimlamoureuxvoice)

And, if you'd like help getting started, my inbox is open! Shoot me a message at [kim@kimlamoureuxvoice.com](mailto:kim@kimlamoureuxvoice.com). I'm happy to chat.

If the traditional studio recital model is no longer serving you and your students, consider this your invitation to reimagine

what's possible. Your students are expanding their skills every day — and in that, you get to evolve right alongside them.

**Kim Lamoureux** is a performer, producer, and voice teacher based on Boston's North Shore. She maintains an active performance career in classical and classically adjacent spaces, bringing her background in immersive theater and love for off-the-beaten track movement modalities to her work. As founder of Kim Lamoureux Voice Studio (KLVS), she is dedicated to cultivating technically grounded, creatively empowered singers. Her work emphasizes vocal freedom, expressive clarity, and personal authenticity. She is also a co-founder of North Shore Voices, and co-producer and host of Vibrato Bar — the region's only classical karaoke piano bar. Across all areas of her work, she brings curiosity, rigor, and a passion for helping singers connect with their most authentic selves.