

# Rachel Suzanne Buttress, MMus

Singer • Voice Pedagogue • Choral Conductor

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## Professional Profile

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I am a voice pedagogue and performing singer with over a decade of experience teaching individual and group instruction for a variety of ages and musical genres. I hold a Master of Music in Opera Performance and bring substantial expertise in sustainable vocal technique, assessment, repertoire selection, and student preparation for performance, examinations, and further study. In addition to maintaining an active professional performance career, both as a solo and ensemble singer, I have extensive experience coordinating all logistical and artistic elements of independent recitals. As an educator across community music schools and private studio contexts, I have substantial experience developing, implementing, and maintaining structured curricula and lesson plans aligned with learning outcomes, progressive skill development, and age- and ability-appropriate repertoire. I prioritize learner-centred pedagogy and stay up to date on voice science and progressive teaching practices through my involvement in local and online teaching communities.

## Education & Credentials

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**Master of Music, Opera** – University of British Columbia (2022)

**Performance Preparatory Programme** – Vancouver Symphony Orchestra School of Music (2020)

**Bachelor of Music, Voice** – Mount Allison University (2015)

**Conducting Certificate** – Capilano University (2013)

**Diploma of Music, Voice** – Capilano University (2012)

## Key Competencies

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- **Learner-Centred Instruction & Pedagogy**
- **Curriculum Design & Instructional Planning**
- **Assessment & Evaluation of Student Learning**
- **Performance, Audition & Admissions Preparation**
- **Repertoire Selection & Vocal Development**
- **Student Engagement, Retention & Mentorship**
- **Program & Event Coordination**
- **Professional Practice & Continuous Development**

## Teaching Experience

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### Voice Instructor

Independent Studio, Vancouver, BC (2019–Present)

- Provide individualized learning plans and instruction across genres including classical, musical theatre, and contemporary popular music
- Develop and implement curriculum and lesson plans; guide students in repertoire selection; design assessments to track student progress
- Collaborate with students to set goals and establish effective practice strategies
- Emphasize sustainable vocal technique, stylistic versatility, and performer autonomy
- Prepare students for performances, auditions, festivals, post-secondary study, and RCM Examinations
- Organize and direct biannual studio recitals, including venue coordination, repertoire selection, rehearsal support with collaborative pianists or provide piano accompaniment myself, program creation, and event promotion
- Manage studio administration: scheduling, billing, and communication

### Voice Instructor

Vancouver Symphony Orchestra School of Music, Vancouver, BC (2019–Present)

- Teach private and group lessons for adolescents and adults
- Prepare students for performances, examinations, and musicianship development
- Support faculty collaboration to enhance student engagement and retention

## **Voice Instructor**

Squamish Academy of Music, Squamish, BC (2015–2019)

- Private and group instruction for all ages and skill levels
- Student assessment, performance preparation, and exam readiness
- Collaborated with faculty to maintain high-quality instruction and student retention

## **Voice Instructor**

Ava Music, North Vancouver, BC (2015–2016)

- Private lessons; student performance and examination preparation

## **Curriculum & Program Development**

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**Piccolini Ensemble**, Vancouver Bach Children's Choir (2023-Present)

- Created a new choral program for preschool aged singers based in Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze methodologies
- Create lesson plans, plan and direct weekly rehearsals and biannual performances including repertoire selection, oversee rehearsal assistant
- Strategize and implement accessible teaching practices for diverse learners, including creating and incorporating inclusive teaching visuals, teaching language, and lesson pacing

**Xwemelch'stn School** (2022-Present)

- Created an elementary music program to equip students with standard Western musicianship skills while aligning with Indigenous led values and learning objectives
- Develop curriculum and lesson plans, teach music classes, and prepare students for performances
- Support and advise faculty on program expansion, including compiling resources, lesson plans, and teaching equipment

**Choral Stage!** BC Choral Federation (2024)

- Revised curriculum, selected repertoire, and promoted program
- Provided group and individual vocal instruction
- Coordinated with collaborative pianist and administrative personnel
- Oversaw rehearsal assistants and choreographer
- Directed and conducted performances

## **Choral & Ensemble Leadership**

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**Director** – Piccolini, Vancouver Bach Children's Choir (2023–Present)

- Develop preschool age vocal curriculum and repertoire
- Direct rehearsals and performances
- Train and oversee a rehearsal assistant

**Trainee Conductor & Rehearsal Assistant** under direction of Artistic Director Marisa Gaetanne – Vancouver Bach Children's Choirs (2022–Present)

- In the absence of the Artistic Director, direct rehearsals and audition singers
- Provide critical support and leadership to any of the Children's Choirs as needed
- Update and strategize with the Artistic Director on ensemble needs
- Teach musicianship, lead sectionals and private coachings, record practice tracks

**Children's Choir Director** – VSO School of Music (2023–2025)

- Develop age and skill level appropriate vocal curriculum and repertoire
- Direct rehearsals and performances for elementary-aged singers
- Coordinate with collaborative pianist
- Train and oversee a rehearsal assistant

**Soprano Section Lead** – Vancouver Bach Symphonic Choir (2023–2025), Laudate Singers (2015-2019), St. Andrews United Church (2017-2019)

- Provide musical leadership within the soprano section
- Support section members with note learning, diction, rhythm, and stylistic accuracy

- Reinforce vocal health and ensemble technique in alignment with conductor's artistic vision
- Serve as a liaison between conductor and section, assisting with communication and consistency
- Lead or support vocal warmups and sectional rehearsals as required
- Model professional rehearsal etiquette, preparation, and musical excellence
- Assist with onboarding new choristers and supporting ensemble cohesion

**Conductor** – *Ein deutsches Requiem, Op. 45: IV*, Brahms – Capilano University Singers, Universität Mozarteum Salzburg, Austria (2013)

## Artistic & Music Direction

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**Artistic Director** – Winter and Spring Student Recitals (2015–Present)

**Artistic Director** – *SummerSing* – Piccolini, Vancouver Bach Children's Choir (2024, 2025)

**Artistic Director** – *Christmas with the Bach Choir* – Piccolini, Vancouver Bach Children's Choir (2023, 2024)

**Artistic Director** – Winter and Spring Performances – Children's Choir, VSO School of Music (2023–2025)

**Music Director** – *Choral Stage!* – BC Choral Federation (2024)

**Music Director** – *The Lion King* – Broadway or Bust (2019)

**Music Director** – *The Music Man* – Broadway or Bust (2018)

**Music Director** – *The Wizard of Oz* – Broadway or Bust (2017)

**Music Director** – *Shrek! The Musical* – Broadway or Bust (2016)

## Operatic Roles

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\* workshop/  
residency

+ understudy

**Miss Pinkerton** – *The Old Maid and the Thief*, Menotti – Heroic Opera (2024)

**Kassia\*** – *Kassia*, Dote – Independent Residency (2024)

**Frau Fluth** – *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, Nicolai – UBC Opera (2023)

**Rusalka+** – *Rusalka*, Dvořák – UBC Opera (2022)

**The Brothel Keeper** – *Shadow Catch*, Chang, Roark, Butler, Samandari – UBC Opera (2022)

**Gianetta** – *The Gondoliers*, Gilbert & Sullivan – UBC Opera (2021)

**Mary Crawford** – *Mansfield Park*, Dove – UBC Opera (2021)

**La Contessa di Folleville+** – *Il viaggio a Reims*, Rossini – UBC Opera (2019)

## Oratorio Soloist

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*Messiah*, Handel – Laudate & Paragon Singers (2023)

*Messiah*, Handel – Capilano University (2019)

*Dixit Dominus*, Handel – Laudate Singers (2018)

*Magnificat*, Vivaldi – Laudate Singers (2018)

*Requiem*, Fauré – St. Andrews United Church (2018)

*Weihnachts-Oratorium*, Bach – Capilano University (2017)

*Great Mass in C minor*, Mozart – Capilano University (2017)

*Gloria*, Vivaldi – Laudate Singers (2016)

*Messiah*, Handel – Capilano University (2015)

## Concert & Recital

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**Soloist** – *Carmina Burana*, Orff – Vancouver Bach Choir (2025)

**Creator, Curator, and Performer** – Independent Recital: *Dusk to Dawn* (2025)

**Chorister** – *Soundstreams* – Vancouver Chamber Choir (2025)

**Chorister** – *Messiah*, Handel – Vancouver Bach Choir (2024)

**Chorister** – *Festive Cantatas* – Vancouver Chamber Choir & Vancouver Early Music Ensemble (2024)

**Chorister** – *Sounds of Finland* – Vancouver Chamber Choir (2024)

**Creator, Curator, and Performer** – Independent Recital: *The Witching Hour* (2024)

**Chorister and Soloist** – *Little Match Girl Passion*, Lang – Vancouver Bach Choir (2023)

**Creator, Curator, and Performer** – Independent Recital: *A Merry Little Christmas Recital* (2023)

**Soloist** – Opera Pub – Against the Grain Theatre (2023–Present)

**Soloist** – Opera in the Park – Opera Lirica (2023)

**Creator, Curator, and Performer** – Independent Recital: *Duets, Arias, and Art Songs* (2022)

**Creator, Curator, and Performer** – Independent Recital: *Royal Victorian Tea Party* (2023)

**Soloist** – *A Traditional Christmas* – Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (December 2019, 2021, 2022)  
**Soloist** – *Carmina Burana*, Orff – Laudate & Paragon Singers (2022)  
**Creator, Curator, and Performer** – Independent Recital: *A German Recital* (2022)  
**Soloist** – *A Serenade of Strings* – VSO Symphonietta (2020)  
**Creator, Curator, and Performer** – Independent Recital: *Art Songs and Arias* (2019)  
**Creator, Curator, and Performer** – Independent Recital: *Bach to Bernstein* (2015)

## Selected Tours

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### Vancouver Chamber Choir:

- Ontario (2025)

### Laudate Singers:

- Okanagan, BC (2016)

### Capilano University Singers:

- France (2015)
- Germany, Czech Republic, Austria (2013)
- Italy (2011)

### St. Thomas Aquinas Choir:

- Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Finland, Sweden (2004, 2009)

## Additional Experience, Affiliations, & Skills

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- **Introduction to Orff Schulwerk**, BC Orff (2024)
- **Box Office and Front of House Staff**, UBC Opera (2021–2022)
- **Choir Representative**, Laudate Singers Administrative and Artistic Staff (2017–2019)
- **Member**, National Association of Teachers of Singing (2016–2018)
- **Soprano**, Four Calling Birds Quartet (2015–2016)
- **Library Assistant**, Mount Allison University Music Library (2014–2015)
- **Keyboardist and Backup Vocalist**, Ghost of Grizzlies (2012–2013)
- **Backup Vocalist**, Daniel Moir Band – Arts Wells Festival (2012)
- **Level 8 Piano**, Royal Conservatory of Music (2010)
- **Chorister**, Dead Man’s Bones (2009)
- **Instrumental Proficiency**: Ukulele and guitar

## Languages

### Studied & Performed:

English (first language)  
 French  
 German  
 Italian  
 Latin  
 Danish  
 Swedish  
 Finnish  
 Icelandic  
 Polish  
 Norwegian  
 Mandarin  
 Korean  
 Japanese  
 Russian  
 Estonian  
 Czech

## Teachers & Mentors

### Voice Teachers:

Marisa Gaetanne, Diane King, Sally Dibblee, George Roberts, Patricia Hodgins, Kelly Nobles

### Conductors:

Jacques Lacombe, Leslie Dala, Gordon Gerrard, Norbert Baxa, David Agler, Jonathan Girard, David Bui, Karl Hirzer, Lars Kaario, Eric Whitacre

### Directors:

Nancy Hermiston, Robin Hahn

### Coaches:

Andrea Grant, Richard Epp, Tina Chang, Perri Lo, Maria Jung, Derek Stanyer, Greg Caisley, Kathy Bjorseth

### Masterclasses:

Maesha Bruggergosman, Brian Horne, Adrienne Pieczonka, Suzie LeBlanc