

Songwriting is Easy

Rachel Dean & Ian LeRoy



A series of workshops and performances where students can inspire an original song cycle based on their lives, improvise songs on the spot, and/or write their own songs– **culminating in performances of their work.**

Artist Bios



Rachel Dean is an NYC-based composer, pianist, and music director. She is a rehearsal pianist for *Hamilton* and *Moulin Rouge* on Broadway as well as a staff pianist at NYU Steinhardt. An ASCAP award recipient, Rachel has had her work performed in New York, Tokyo, Miami, Ohio, Arizona, and New Jersey. Musicals include *The Anxiety Project* (with David Brush, [now available for licensing](#)), *The Ballad of Janis Matthews and the Dodo Scouts* (with Giancarlo Rodaz), and *Medusa* (with Wes Braver). A concert featuring her music was recently put on at Lincoln Center. She plays piano for improv groups and teaches musical improv workshops throughout the country. Rachel is a member of ASCAP and AFM Local 802. MFA in Musical Theatre Writing from New York University Tisch School of the Arts, BM in Composition from the University of Miami Frost School of Music.

Ian LeRoy is an NYC-based music director, pianist, and vocal coach. Favorite credits include *Once Upon a Rhyme* (NYU Tisch Drama Stage), *She Loves Me* (Creede Repertory Theatre), *West Side Story* (Bigfork Summer Playhouse), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Near West Theatre), *Spring Awakening* (Youngstown State University), *Edges* (University of Mount Union) and the All-Ohio production of *Once On This Island* with the Ohio Educational Theatre Association. He is a music director and staff pianist for NYU Steinhardt's Vocal Performance program, an audition pianist for Disney Parks Live Entertainment and Disney Cruise Line, and he also happens to have music directed an a cappella group at Google. His article, "[The Miseducation of Musical Theatre Majors: Rap Pedagogy for the Stage](#)," was recently published in the Musical Theatre Educators' Alliance Journal. He has taught song improv at theaters and festivals throughout the United States, and his musicals for young audiences have been performed for more than 50,000 students throughout the US and Canada.



Contact us for more info:
songwritingiseasy@gmail.com

Available Packages

Song Improvisation

1 day

- 1 workshop ([demo reel](#))
- Up to 2 class visits
- 1 performance by students

Songwriting Sessions (+ Song Improvisation)

3-7 days

- Up to 3 workshops
- Up to 5 class visits
- 2 performances
(one for song improv students,
one for student songwriters)

Full Original Song Cycle (+ Songwriting Sessions + Song Improvisation)

12-21 days

- Up to 5 workshops
- Up to 10 class visits
- 3+ performances
(song improv, student songwriters,
& song cycle performances)

Artist Residency

30+ days

- Custom content TBD



What the students get:

- At least 12 original songs written specifically for their voices
- At least 50 hours of work with NYC composers/music directors

Show details:

- Approx. 8-12 students in cast
- 10-15 songs (w/at least 2 group numbers)
- Presenting and discussing themes and stories from students' lives

Full Original Song Cycle

Sample Schedule and Requirements/Objectives

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
A few weeks before rehearsals begin: Video auditions <i>(TBD; usually 16-32 bars of a musical theatre selection)</i>				6-10:30 Callbacks <i>For callbacks, students will perform both:</i> <i>32 bars of a song from the musical theatre repertoire and ~1 minute of an original song written by the auditioner</i>	6-10:30 Callbacks 11:00 Cast list announced	9a-9p Cast meeting, discussion & development <i>Discussion of themes for show</i> <i>Get to know ranges and voice types</i> <i>Discuss process</i>
Writing day (access to pianos) No Rehearsal	Class visits/ writing day 7-10:30 Music rehearsal	Class visits/ writing day 7-10:30 Music rehearsal	Class visits/ writing day 7-10:30 Music rehearsal	Class visits/ writing day 7-10:30 Music rehearsal	Class visits/ writing day 7-10:30 Music & staging	9a-9p Music & staging
10:30-1 Music & staging 2-4:30 Dress Rehearsal 6:30 Call 8-9:15 Show 9:15-10:15 Talkback	6:30 Call 8-9:15 Show 9:15-10:15 Talkback					

Equipment & Space Requirements:

- Access to two pianos or keyboards in two separate rooms
- Access to a printer and ability to print (or guarantee that all participants have tablets)
- Two separate rehearsal spaces (each with piano, chairs, and music stands)
- Performance space (with piano, chairs, music stands, and audience seating)
- Basic lighting design

Educational Objectives

- Build collaboration skills in a fast-paced process, mimicking new work development processes
- Explore and experience the process of creating a new musical by professional composers
- Develop abilities as an actor-singer through coaching and new work development
- Learn and develop flexibility in the face of changing materials
- Professional development and access to NYC theatre artists working on Broadway and regionally

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Sample Topics for Class Visits & Workshops

Writing a Musical

- ❖ Rachel has written multiple musicals which have been performed worldwide
- ❖ Ian's musicals have toured to 50,000+ students throughout the U.S. and Canada

Auditioning in New York City (and/or Working with an Audition Pianist)

- ❖ We have both played hundreds of professional auditions in NYC (including *Hamilton* for Rachel and Disney Cruise Line & Parks for Ian!)

Acting while Singing

- ❖ We both regularly coach Broadway and national tour performers in NYC

Rap in Musical Theatre

- ❖ In addition to her work in *Hamilton*, Rachel's show *Medusa* includes rap
- ❖ Ian music directed the hip-hop show *Once Upon a Rhyme* at NYU Tisch and is published in the MTEA Journal on musical theatre rap pedagogy

Moving to New York City (and/or Networking in Musical Theatre)

- ❖ Both Ian and Rachel successfully transitioned to NYC from much smaller towns

Careers in Music

- ❖ There are many more jobs related to music than most people are aware of; we love to chat with students about the many paths available to them

Reach out! We would be happy to chat with you about your program's needs.

We have many years of experience in musical theatre, classical music, jazz, and a wide variety of other fields– we've even taught basic swing dancing classes at a music retreat!