

The University of Michigan School of Music is consistently ranked as one of the best music schools in the country. Alumni have gone on to perform in venues like Carnegie Hall and The Metropolitan Opera and with prestigious ensembles like the New York Philharmonic. The acceptance rate sits somewhere around 8%.

As a student at the School of Music, I am constantly in awe of the talent of my peers and professors. It seems kind of impossible that so many amazing artists can cohabitate in one place. Sometimes it seems impossible that I belong there too.

Even though being at such a prestigious school is inspiring and working with such talented people is motivating, it can also be stifling. Comparison seems inevitable, and it's very easy to forget your own strengths when you're wrapped up in someone else's. It's easy to feel unworthy in the face of so much talent.

Today I will be interviewing three incredible musicians who teach and learn at the School of Music: Amy Petrongelli, Dr. Matthew Thompson, and Professor Carmen Pelton. I've often found that my anxieties about being "good enough" subside after I talk to people who have been where I am now: a sophomore music student who is still trying to find her own voice. It's always surprising, and comforting, to hear that what I'm feeling, and a lot of my classmates are feeling, isn't uncommon. In fact, I'd say it's universal among all young performers. Hopefully, the wise words from our colleagues and mentors can help remind us that we aren't alone...and that each of us is on our own unique path to our version of best.

Amy Petrongelli is a third year DMA student studying Vocal Performance at the University of Michigan School of Music. She has held numerous leading roles in University operas and teaches as a Graduate Student Instructor. Amy and I both study under Professor Carmen Pelton, which is how I got to know her my freshman year. Since meeting her as a freshman, Amy has served as an inspiration to me both as a musician and as a person.

That was Amy Petrongelli's rendition of De Lilli by Joseph Marx. Dr. Matthew Thompson is a lecturer of Voice and Music Education at the School of Music. He is an accomplished pianist and vocal coach, having graduated from the School of Music with his master and doctoral degrees at U of M. He is one of the most beloved faculty members at the School of Music.

Carmen Pelton is a Professor of Voice at the University of Michigan. She is also *my* voice professor.

I'd like to thank Amy, Dr. Thompson, and Professor Pelton for their time and constant mentorship, the music library for letting me check out a bunch of their microphones. I'd also like to thank my classmates and friends for their endless support and their help working on this piece. Thank you.