

Dear Laura,

I want to start off by saying how grateful I am to have had you as my voice teacher this past semester. Throughout all my years of college, taking lessons from various teachers, I truly have learned the most from you. I have never felt more comfortable in my voice, and taking lessons from you has skyrocketed my confidence. Your teaching style and encouragement have created such a safe environment for me to really experiment with my voice in ways that I never would have, ultimately leading to moments of genuine breakthrough in my vocal abilities. You also bring humor to our lesson, which I genuinely appreciate. Sometimes, I have a hard time shaking off any fears or anxieties that I have, but every time I see you and start talking to you, everything that I am worried about that day or that week just disappears for an hour, so genuinely, thank you. I also know that I will have a great time doing something I genuinely love, which is exactly why I wanted to take lessons in the first place, and I am so glad to have been paired with you.

When I first started taking voice lessons in college three years ago, my expectations for myself were very high. They were actually ridiculously and unrealistically high. There were times when I would just beat myself up about it and treat myself unkindly just because I couldn't do something, and that wasn't healthy. Additionally, in my previous lessons, when I would try something over and over again and would get frustrated about not being able to reach a note or hold a note for a long time, I would feel genuinely embarrassed. However, in instances where I struggled with my voice in lessons with you, I have never felt like I was being judged or put on the spot to do something that I didn't feel comfortable doing. And even when I have given up mentally trying to do something like sing a low note, you still push me in the right direction, and then I end up surprising myself. These are moments that I love about our lessons.

A specific breakthrough where I genuinely surprised myself was when I was singing "All I Ask." Before I took lessons with you, I could NEVER reach those low notes, and somehow, on our 3rd or 4th lesson,

you said to sing the note as if I was talking through my nose. Immediately, I hit that note, and I was so happy, I actually couldn't believe that my voice had done that. Even applying this to "Sure on this Shining Night," I was taught long and tall vowels, which, yes, is important to do in classical voice, but also focusing my sound forward and making sure my body and mind are connected have helped me improve in the song as well.

Lastly, the mere fact that you were open to helping me sing a Hindi song, even though it was your first time listening to that song, just solidified my respect for you. It would have been so easy to make me work on a song that you were familiar with, but you were open to trying something new. Especially in the Indian song, I struggled so much with the placement of my voice and trying to integrate my Indian classical training into this song. However, you were able to EASILY figure out where my voice was struggling and address it immediately. It just shows how great of a teacher you are to be able to maneuver your teachings into an Indian song and still apply your knowledge to help me sound the best that I can.

Overall, I have learned an immense amount from you, and I hope to continue working with you and seeking your guidance. You have made my voice lessons this semester incredibly fun and memorable, and my voice has never sounded better. Thank you again for everything.

Sincerely,  
Sanaya