

# Running Start Spotlights

more under: [Running Start Spotlights](#)

more under: [Spring 2015](#)

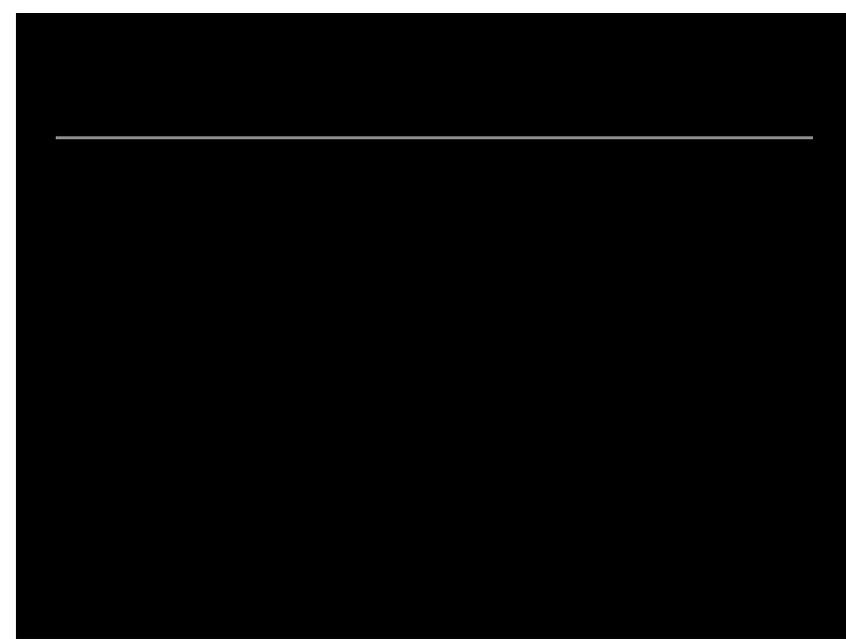
[Jay Meetze](#)

## March Interview

Jay Meetze, Alum, BM 1991

Conductor, innovator, and teacher Jay Meetze is the Founder, Artistic and Music Director of Opera Company of Brooklyn. According to CNN, “Conductor Jay Meetze has been instrumental in making opera accessible to a wider audience. Meetze attracts a new generation of music lovers.” He does so by staging operas in unusual venues and making tickets affordable to many. In addition to conducting countless ensembles in the U.S. and abroad, Meetze recently released a Grammy-nominated CD.

Video provided by: Opera Company of Brooklyn



## Interview with Jay Meetze

*How would you describe your professional identity?*

I am the Founder, Artistic & Music Director of Opera Company of Brooklyn (OCB).

*Can you summarize your current entrepreneurial projects in a sentence or two?*

OCB was founded to promote talented young artists, while providing affordable and accessible opera thus building new audiences for the art form. Many of our endeavors with young artists have garnished attention from several media sources, including, being featured on the Jeopardy quiz show, Good Morning America with MythBusters, CNN, National Public Radio, 1010 WINS, reviews and articles (some front-page and full-page) in the Wall Street Journal, NY Times, NY Post and NY Daily News, New York Magazine, American Record Guide, Opera News and Crain’s New York Business. Our efforts have included working with living artists. OCB premiered Korcak’s Orphans and the company received a Grammy-nomination for our CD, Divas, on Albany Records and featuring music by and with American composer, Thomas Pasatieri. It was named “Critic’s Choice” and “Best of the year” by Metropolitan Opera’s Opera News magazine.

*How has your career, project, or initiative been growing and developing since you graduated? Since last year? What are*

*your next steps as you go forward?*

My education at MSU allowed me to understand the singing voice and gave me knowledge for teaching music. After graduating from MSU, I taught general music to gifted children in Chicago. I then taught Music Appreciation to 9th graders in Brooklyn, New York, using a college text book. I developed that program to a full keyboard lab and composition class and became a conductor at Manhattan School of Music. Currently, the great repertoire at MSU is also presented here, including Liebeslieder Waltzes, The Tales of Hoffmann and Carmen. I continue to draw upon all of my past experiences and relationships as I constantly brainstorm fresh ideas for promoting young artists and the opera art form through my work with OCB. My future efforts will include, conducting incredible and nearly overwhelmingly spectacular music and learning scores. In April, OCB presents two evenings of opera per month. The volume of work never bothers me. It is relaxing to sit at the piano and play through all the vocal parts, and then the full score.

*How did the College of Music prepare you to embark on your career?*

The College of Music, or the School of Music, as it was known back when I was a student, best helped me by providing me with the highest level of educational opportunities, and by the welcoming/nurturing environment. Those two qualities were true gifts. All of the faculty were fantastic and encouraged everyone to be the best. I made lifelong friendships, which continue to provide me with a support system.

*What do you think are the most important skills to have as a 21st century musician? As an entrepreneur?*

As a 21st century musician, you must be polite, and most important, arrive on time for rehearsals and shows. My Board of Directors has banned people from our program because of lateness. As an entrepreneur, I would say you must be true to your passions, seek out the best education, work very hard, and surround yourself with people who believe in you.

*What words of wisdom do you have for prospective MSU students?*

My words of wisdom for prospective students are: get creative in marketing yourself, be prompt, and lastly and most importantly, have the follow through. With any endeavor - If you say you will do something, do it well. This is also career advice. If a "better gig" pops up once you have committed, be honest with the people you are working. Many people are willing to make changes to help you with your career path. Don't burn bridges. The artists world is small, and you never know where your reputation may lead you.