



came to NEIU to pursue his master's degree in vocal pedagogy, earning an M.A. in 1999. Shortly after graduation, he became a part-time faculty member at NEIU, teaching applied voice and the "Musical Experience," an introductory course for non-majors. He left NEIU and finished a doctorate at Northwestern University in 2005.

Ratner's career has included more than two decades of experience as a performer and an opera director. He learned his craft assisting directors at major opera houses including Covent Garden (London), the Metropolitan Opera, Munich Opera, San Francisco Opera, English National Opera, New York City Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, and the Spoleto Festival in Italy where he worked with eminent composer, Gian Carlo Menotti. From 1994 to 1999 he served as Artistic Director of Chicago Opera Theater, Chicago's second largest opera company.

Brommel likes opera and saw many of these productions before he met Ratner. "I saw his directing achievements and recognized Ratner's talents," Brommel recalled.

Ratner's recent singing engagements include the role of "Captain" in [redacted] with the Opera Naples, and "Marchese" in [redacted] with the Kalamazoo Symphony. Other operatic roles include "Marullo" in [redacted] with A corn Theater, "Ping" in [redacted] with Kalamazoo Symphony, and "Frank" in [redacted] with the Opera Naples. In 1998 he performed in an opera at NEIU taking on the lead role of "Schicchi" in [redacted].

In 2010, Ratner won a coveted Fulbright Grant to teach and study at the famous St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music. He taught in the classroom offices of Shostakovich and performed on the stage where Prokofiev introduced new works. Since then, he has sung in Russian before audiences throughout the USA and Europe. Ratner has sung in 14 languages and now receives great praise from native Russians for his use of their language in song.

Today, Ratner is the Director of Opera and full Professor of Voice for the School of Music at Western Michigan University. He directs the university's annual opera production and teaches applied voice, opera workshop, vocal literature, and French and German diction.

In honor of Ratner's extraordinary achievements, Dr. Brommel named the Brommel-Ratner Scholarship in Music after him. This scholarship is awarded annually to a junior or senior majoring in voice who also demonstrates financial need. "Northeastern made it possible for me to realize my long-cherished dream of singing professionally," says Ratner. "I am thrilled that this scholarship will enable others to do the same."