

FAQs about MM and DMA programs in orchestral conducting at UCLA

Are you taking applications for Fall 2021 admission?

No. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the first opening in the studio will be for admission in Fall 2022. You may obtain detailed information about the application process at:

<https://schoolofmusic.ucla.edu/admissions/graduate/conducting-mm-dma/>

What do you look for in potential candidates for your program?

Successful candidates for the MM and DMA programs in orchestral conducting will demonstrate mastery of their chosen instrumental, vocal or compositional fields, fluency in the literature and materials of music, a gift for leadership, an intense interpretive passion, the foundations of a sound conducting technique, excellent organizational skills and the potential to make a major contribution to the profession. Advanced keyboard skills and the ability to coach and accompany opera productions are highly desirable.

A note about UCLA's DMA program:

The DMA program combines intensive performance training with rigorous academic coursework, and culminates in a dissertation of approximately 60-100 pages in length -- a publishable, original contribution to the understanding of music performance and performance practice. Only students who are top performers and top scholars are accepted into the UCLA DMA program. Mastery of English is a prerequisite for the successful completion of the DMA degree.

What does your application process consist of?

The application process consists of two stages.

1. The preliminary stage consists of the submission of an application with all supporting materials, including video.

Videos must contain at least 15 minutes of rehearsal and 15 minutes of performance footage. Rehearsal video should include significant portions where the applicant stops and rehearses the ensemble, and should demonstrate how the applicant influences the musicians through both physical gesture and verbal communication; run-throughs in rehearsal settings are not considered rehearsal video. Both rehearsal and performance video should be framed from the perspective of the ensemble, with the conductor's face visible. Applicants with appropriate online performance and rehearsal video (on a personal website or on video hosting services such as YouTube, Vimeo, etc.) may submit links in lieu of uploading video, but the videos must be viewable without password protection (e.g., unlisted rather than private videos on YouTube).

The deadline for the application is December 1st.

2. Applicants chosen from this preliminary stage of the process will be invited to come to UCLA for a personal interview with me in January or February 2021. (NOTE: If an in-person interview is not possible due to COVID-19, a Zoom interview session will be arranged.) At this interview, you will be asked to discuss interpretive and performance issues related to Mozart Symphony No. 33, K. 319 or No. 34, K. 338. You may choose which symphony to prepare. Please prepare the symphony as you would for a rehearsal and performance opportunity with an excellent orchestra. You may be asked to conduct a portion of the work with piano. If you are an instrumentalist, you may be asked to supplement your discussion by playing some excerpts from the piece; if you are a singer, you may be asked to illustrate your discussion vocally. The interview will also include more general discussion of musical topics, and may include some sightreading at the piano.

There will be no live audition with orchestra.

How many students are currently in your studio and how many openings do you expect?

As of Fall 2020, there are two DMA students (one first-year and one third-year) and one MM student (first-year) in the program. Since there are generally no more than two students in the program at any one time, one opening is anticipated for 2022-23. DMA and MM candidates are welcome to apply.

How much time in front of the orchestra do students receive?

There is substantial podium time for conducting students with both UCLA Philharmonia and UCLA Symphony. For further information about the UCLA orchestras, please visit <http://www.uclaorchestras.com>

What about performance opportunities with the orchestras?

UCLA Symphony, the campus-wide orchestra which meets 7:15 – 9:45 PM on Wednesday nights, was created in part as a “lab” orchestra for student conductors, so it is a major outlet for performance. Under my supervision, orchestral conducting students lead and manage the ensemble in two of the three academic quarters; orchestral, wind and choral conducting students lead Symphony during the other quarter.

Student conductors also perform portions of concerts with UCLA Philharmonia. In the final year of the Masters program, each conductor is expected to lead at least half of a Philharmonia program, or its equivalent. In the final year of the DMA program, each conductor is expected to lead an entire Philharmonia program, or its equivalent.

In 2007-2008, one of my conducting students co-founded *Flux*, the Music Department’s ensemble for contemporary music. This ensemble, which has since become a credit course and is now taught by Grammy-award-winning pianist [Gloria Cheng](#), is an important performance outlet for our conducting students.

Student conductors are also encouraged to organize their own smaller ensembles for performance, and are frequently called upon to lead performances by student and faculty ensembles.

What repertoire have conducting students recently performed with the orchestras?

Here is a list of works conducted in performance at UCLA by our orchestral conducting students since 2012-13:

2019-20

Berlioz *Roman Carnival Overture*

Cowell Harmonica Concerto (1962) (postponed due to COVID)

Dvorak Symphony No. 8, Op. 88

Falla *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* for piano and orchestra

Grieg Piano Concerto, Op. 16, Mvt. I

Nikolai Kapustin Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 14, Mvt. III

Kodaly Galanta Dances (postponed due to COVID)

Mozart Symphony No. 31 (*Paris*), K. 297

Ravel *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*

Rimsky-Korsakov *Capriccio Espagnole* (postponed due to COVID)

Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 1, Op. 107, Mvt. I

Tomasi *Semaine Sainte à Cuzco* for trumpet and chamber orchestra

2018-19

Brahms Symphony No. 2, Op. 73

Chávez *Sinfonia India* (Symphony No. 2)

Franz Doppler Concerto for Two Flutes in D minor (I. Allegro maestoso)

Haydn Cello Concerto in D major

Hummel Trumpet Concerto in E flat (II. Andante; III. Rondo)

Eugene Goosens Concerto in One Movement for Oboe and Orchestra

Janice Hamer (b. 1947) *Lost Childhood* (2013) (world premiere of the complete opera)

Koussevitsky Concerto for Double Bass

Mahler Suite from the Orchestral Works of J.S. Bach (1909)

Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major, Op. 19 (II. Scherzo)

Schubert Entr'acte No. 1 from *Rosamunde*

Sibelius Symphony No. 1 in E minor, Op. 39

R. Strauss *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*

Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet* Overture-Fantasy

Verdi Overture to *Nabucco*

2017-18

Beethoven Symphony No. 3 (*Eroica*)

Borodin *Polovtsian Dances* from *Prince Igor*

Brahms Academic Festival Overture

Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1

Elgar *Enigma* Variations, Op. 36

Ibert Flute Concerto (third movement)

Liadov *The Enchanted Lake*

Lysenko Overture to *Taras Bulba*

Mendelssohn Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor (third movement)

Mozart Violin Concerto No. 5 in A

Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 3 in C (first movement)

Ravel Suite from *Ma Mère l'Oye*

Schumann Cello Concerto in A minor, Op. 129 (first movement)

Sviridov *Snowstorm*, Musical Illustration to Pushkin's Short Novel

Virgil Thomson *The Mother of Us All*

Multiple composers *David's Quilt (2017; world premiere)*

2016-17

Adams, John *Son of Chamber Symphony* (composer in attendance)

Beethoven Symphony No. 3

Carter *Double Trio*

Debussy *Prélude à l'après-midi d'une faune*

Elgar Cello Concerto (first movement)

Haydn Symphony No. 96

Liszt *Totentanz*

Massenet *Cendrillon* (complete opera)

Maurice, Paule *Tableaux de Provence* for also saxophone and orchestra

Mozart Bassoon Concerto (first movement)

Murail, Tristan *Dernières nouvelles du vent d'ouest*

Prokofiev Suite from *Lieutenant Kijé*

Respighi *La Boutique Fantasque* (complete ballet)

Rossini Overture to "Guillaume Tell"

Rota, Nino *Castel del Monte* for horn and orchestra

Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 1

Stravinsky Suite from *The Firebird* (1919)

2015-16

Bizet *Carmen* Suite No. 1

Bizet (arr. Constant) *Le Tragédie de Carmen* (complete opera)

Britten Serenade for Tenor Solo, Horn and Strings

Howard Chen *Time(e)scap(ad)es* (world premiere)

Copland *El Salón México*

Debussy *Nuages* and *Fêtes* from Three Nocturnes

Falla Suite No. 2 from *The Three-Cornered Hat*

Gershwin *An American in Paris*

Grieg Norwegian Air No. 1, Op. 63 (*In Folk Style*)

Ibert Concertino da camera for alto saxophone

Franz Krommer Concerto for Two Clarinets (third movement)

Mozart *Così fan Tutte* (complete opera)

Mozart Symphony No. 35, K. 385 (*Haffner*)

Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18

Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30 (first movement)

Reinecke Flute Concerto

Carmen Staaf *River* (world premiere)

Steven Stucky *Boston Fancies*

Tchaikovsky Pezzo Capriccioso, Op. 62

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto in D, Op. 35

Wagner Overture to *Der fliegende Holländer*

2014-15

Beethoven Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21

Bernstein Three Dance Episodes from *On the Town*

Bottesini Grand Duo Concertante for Violin and Double Bass

Brahms Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77

Debussy Danse Sacrée et Danse Profane for harp and strings

Avner Dorman *Spices, Perfumes, Toxins* (2001-03) (first movement)

Dvorak Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World")

Fauré Suite from *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Op. 80

Golijov *Ayre*

Grieg Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16 (first movement)

Haydn Concerto for Cello in D major (first movement)

Liszt *Les Préludes*, S. 97

Mercadante *I Due Figaro (The Two Figaros)* (1835)

Puccini Preludio Sinfonico

Shostakovich Piano Concerto No. 1

J. Strauss *Neu-Wien (New Vienna)*, Op. 342

Weill *Down in the Valley*

2013-14

Boehme Trumpet Concerto, Op. 18 (first movement)

Brahms Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a

Copland Symphony No. 2 (Short Symphony)

Gershwin *Cuban Overture*

Haydn Cello Concerto in D major, Hob. VIIIb/2, Op. 101

Ibert Flute Concerto (third movement)

William Kraft Timpani Concerto (third movement)

Mozart *Don Giovanni*, K. 527 (staged performance with UCLA Opera)

Betty Olivero *Bashrav* (2004)

Nino Rota Concerto for Bassoon (1974-77)

Rimsky-Korsakov *Scheherazade*, Op. 35

Séjourné Marimba Concerto (first movement)

Sibelius Symphony No. 5, Op. 82

David Utzinger *Mirrored Images of Starlings in Flight* (world premiere) (2014)

Vaughan-Williams Concerto for Tuba

2012-13

Beethoven Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61

Roger Bourland *The Dove and the Nightingale* (2013) (world premiere workshop performances)

Manuel Calzada *La Garita del Diablo* (2013) (world premiere)

Ryan George *Firefly* (UCLA Wind Ensemble)

Hertel Trumpet Concerto No. 1 in E flat major

Colin McPhee Nocturne for chamber orchestra

Mendelssohn Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 56

Ravel *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (staged performance with UCLA Opera)

Ravel *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*

Sarasate *Zigeunerweisen*, Op. 20

Schoenberg *Pierrot Lunaire*, Op. 21

Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 1, Op. 107 (first movement)

Shostakovich Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

Roberto Sierra *Fandangos* (UCLA Wind Ensemble)

Sibelius Symphony No. 1 in E minor, Op. 39

Stravinsky Suite from *Histoire du Soldat*

Tchaikovsky *Méditation* from *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*, Op. 42

Oliver Waespi Suite for Wind Orchestra (UCLA Wind Ensemble)

Wolf-Ferrari II *Segreto di Susanna* (staged performance with UCLA Opera)

Is there anything else about UCLA's orchestral conducting program that you would highlight in comparison to other graduate programs in orchestral conducting?

- The level of personal attention that the enterprising conductor can receive from the music faculty at UCLA is unusual in high-level graduate conducting programs, both because the program and the school are relatively small, and because the faculty is extraordinarily committed to the education of young conductors.

- The program provides an amount of podium time and a level of responsibility to graduate conductors which is greater than most.

- UCLA's approach to teaching orchestral conducting emphasizes a rigorous approach to textual analysis and interpretive choice, close attention to gestural and rehearsal technique, a focus on string techniques and the development of the student's wider musical and artistic culture.

- The program offers strong training and experience in both orchestral and operatic conducting, and encourages close contact with the excellent directing and coaching staff of the UCLA Opera Studio.

- UCLA offers the resources of one of the country's great universities, located in an international music and arts capital. Every effort is made to connect the interested student with the vast array of artists and resources that Southern California has to offer.

- The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music was established in January 2016. It is the first school of music in the University of California system, and combines our three music-related departments -- Ethnomusicology, Music and Musicology -- into a single unit. The opportunities and synergies provided by these three high-level departments are unusually rich and varied.

What financial assistance is available?

Students in the graduate orchestral conducting program generally also serve as Teaching Assistants in both the orchestra and opera programs. Responsibilities may include conducting rehearsals when the faculty conductor is away, leading sectionals, serving as orchestra manager or librarian, accompanying and/or coaching for the opera studio,

coordinating recruitment, auditions and concert promotion. The compensation for teaching assistantships consists of tuition and fee remissions plus a monthly stipend. For further information about financial assistance, please contact the department's graduate advisor, Allison Taka, at: ataka@schoolofmusic.ucla.edu.

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