

Simpson College
&
CORO

Master of Music in Choral Conducting
Program Details

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coro

**SIMPSON
COLLEGE**

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Three-Summer MM in Choral Conducting

Program Overview

The Master of Music in Choral Conducting offered by Simpson College in partnership with the CORO Choral Institute strives to offer a distinctively student-centered experience. The program believes in the creative and intellectual growth of every student and seeks to provide curriculum and experiences that lead to highly-qualified and experienced artist-teachers in choral music. The degree is designed to prepare musicians for careers in choral conducting through graduate-level coursework and professional-level performances.

Current secondary-school choir directors, elementary music educators with an interest in choral music, church music directors, community choir directors, children's choir directors, performing singers, and those interested in pursuing a terminal degree in choral conducting and college teaching will all find this degree appealing and uniquely well-suited to them in its quality of instruction and choral experience, as well as its schedule of delivery in the summer-only months. Students completing this degree program will enhance their work in the field as choral conductors and artist-teachers in positions similar to those from which they came to the program.

During the summer academic semester, choral literature, individual conducting lessons, rehearsal techniques and strategies, and score study complement each other in a symbiotic way. A typical day combines a lecture/presentation-style choral literature class with group conducting sessions and choral rehearsals in order to integrate conducting gesture, rehearsal techniques and pacing, and score analysis. For example, the cantatas of Bach are discussed in the morning choral literature class, focusing on the composer's life and the form of his cantatas in relation to other composers. In the afternoon, the seminar in choral conducting offers students time to discuss rehearsal strategies of Baroque music and integrating instrumental forces. The Institute Choir then rehearses excerpts of a cantata under the baton of the graduate students while professors work with them on conducting gesture, rehearsal technique, and score analysis during their individual podium time. These rehearsals culminate in a performance presented to the general public as part of the Friday Cafe Series and the Choral Festival Discovery Concerts. Additional music courses for the degree include music theory and history, choral pedagogy, choral diction, and advanced musicianship, all of which are also completed during the three summer sessions.

Conducting/Performing Opportunities for Students

- each student receives generous podium time per week in a lab choir setting to hone rehearsal technique and conducting gesture.
- each student works with all four primary conducting professors throughout their course of study as well as additional world-renowned conductors in masterclass settings and guest lectures.
- each student conducts rehearsals and performances with the CORO Vocal Artists.
- each student performs with the CORO Vocal Artists in public performances and commercial recordings.

Mission Statement

Graduate students in the MM in Choral Conducting program will gain in-depth knowledge and competence in the field and specialization of choral conducting. The program focuses on practical skills that conductors need in order to perform at high achieving levels – those of score study, literature, conducting gesture, rehearsal technique. Additionally, the program acknowledges and values ample opportunities and requirements for studies that support the student's area of specialization. Study in areas like music theory, music history, ensemble work, and advanced musicianship are paramount to the continued growth of all students as musicians.

The program affords students the opportunity to engage in creating professional work through creative work (that of creating artistic choral performances) based in historically accurate performance practice, the ability to influence artistic choices through conducting gesture, and aesthetically pleasing and creative programming. This requirement is measured and assessed for the individual student and the program through the student's enrolling in Mus 561: Concert Conducting, whereby he or she creates choral performances as evidence of creative work.

Because the program is committed to fostering each musician's unique strengths, it celebrates the past experience and interests that students bring with them to their study. Students will enjoy an abundance of performance opportunities on our campus, in the greater Des Moines area, and around the nation and the world. Students of the MM in Choral Conducting experience a curriculum that prepares them to meet the real demands facing musicians in the marketplace. Our students graduate with both depth and breadth of knowledge, training, and performance experience. These skills, combined with the connections students form with our committed faculty and one another, allow them to find their place in the larger world of music after graduation.

Section 1 – Audition and Entrance Exams

Application Submission and Entrance Requirements

Application Submission

The online graduate application is found on the Simpson College website along with instructions on how to upload your supporting materials. The following application materials must be submitted by the applicant before any review will begin:

1. Online Application form
2. Curriculum Vitae
3. Personal Statement: In your personal statement, please describe your educational and musical background, your teaching philosophy, goals and objectives, and future career plans. Please feel free to include any information that you feel would be helpful to the committee in making our admission decisions. Limit your statement to 600 words.
4. Prescreening videos: Two video selections of approximately 6-10 minutes each. One video should be of a recent performance and one should be of a recent rehearsal. Videos should not be edited for content. It is preferred that the videos capture the front of the conductor (as viewed from the singer's perspective); however, we understand that this is not always possible and strongly recommend that at least one (preferably the rehearsal video) shows this perspective of the applicant.
5. Contact Information for three professional references.

Entrance Requirements

Prior degree expectations: a bachelor of arts or bachelor of music degree from an accredited undergraduate institution with a major in music, music performance, or music education. If such a degree is not achieved, the program would expect to see commensurate undergraduate study of music theory, music history, conducting, choral techniques, demonstration of piano proficiency and ensemble participation.

Expected undergraduate GPA: 3.0 or higher

Expected proficiency levels as revealed in required videos: conducting gesture that communicates musical intent; evidence of appropriate interpretation of the score; functional rehearsal techniques that achieve a stated or implied goal; demonstration of musical skills commensurate with the ability to successfully lead and respond to a choral rehearsal.

Section 1 – Audition and Entrance Exams Entrance Exams and Remedial Coursework

Evaluation of music history knowledge, music theory knowledge, and diction occurs during the first summer session through choral literature presentations, choral rehearsals, the music history course, and the vocal pedagogy course.

If the faculty determine a student does not have sufficient undergraduate-level knowledge in music theory or music history remedial coursework will be determined by the appropriate faculty and the student will be expected to complete that coursework during the fall or spring semesters following their first summer in the program. This coursework can be taken at Simpson College, or the coursework can be taken at a different institution provided that the student receives approval in advance from the appropriate Simpson faculty.

Section 1 – Audition and Entrance Exams Advanced Standing Admission

In addition to the application procedures outlined above, undergraduate candidates at Simpson College for advanced standing must fulfill the following requirements:

- Minimum GPA of 3.25 in music coursework
- Completion of at least 2 semesters of undergraduate conducting
- Completion of at least 1 choral techniques course
- Completion of at least 4 semesters of music theory
- Completion of at least 4 semesters of music history
- Completion of the piano proficiency requirement at Simpson College

Section 2 – MM Program Requirements Required Coursework

Course	Credits
Choral Literature	12
MUS 501: Choral Literature 1	
MUS 502: Choral Literature 2	
MUS 503: Choral Literature 3	
Seminar in Choral Conducting	6
MUS 511: Seminar in Choral Conducting 1	
MUS 512: Seminar in Choral Conducting 2	
MUS 513: Seminar in Choral Conducting 3	
Music Theory	4
MUS 531: Analysis of Musical Scores	
Music History	2
MUS 521: Topics in Music History and Literature	
Choral Topics	4
MUS 551: Vocal Pedagogy in the Choral Setting (2 Credits)	
MUS 552: Choral Diction 1 (1 Credit)	
MUS 553: Choral Diction 2 (1 Credit)	
Musicianship	1
MUS 542: Advanced Musicianship Training	
Graduate Choral Ensemble (The following course is repeated each summer)	3
MUS 541: Graduate Choral Ensemble	
Concert Conducting (The following course is repeated each summer)	3
MUS 561: Concert Conducting – Choral	
Oral Comprehensive Exam	1
MUS 571: Master’s Oral Comprehensive Exam – Choral	
Total	36

Section 2 – MM Program Requirements Recital Requirements

Each summer, students will take MUS 561. During each summer, opportunities to conduct in performance will be assigned to each student by the conducting faculty. The conducting committee evaluates these performances. Evaluations are retained by the Program Co-Director and are available for the student to view at any time. At the end of the program of study, the combined conducted pieces must have contained the following elements.

1. A combined performance time of approximately 60 minute.
2. One selection must be performed in English (as the original language)
3. One selection must be performed in Latin
4. One selection must be performed in German, French, or Italian
5. One selection must be performed in an additional language
6. One selection must be unaccompanied
7. One selection must be with keyboard accompaniment
8. One selection must be with instrumentalists
9. One selection must be from a multi-movement work (although the full work is not required, knowledge of the entire work and how the particular movement(s) relate to the entire work is required)

Section 2 – MM Program Requirements Oral Comprehensive Exam

Each student is required to pass an oral comprehensive exam that will be administered during their third summer in the program. This exam will be administered by the members of the current summer's conducting committee. During the exam, the student must demonstrate knowledge of choral literature and concert programming, music theory and history, choral rehearsal techniques, choral pedagogy and diction, and choral resources, all at a Master's level.

The exam will be a minimum of 45 minutes and a maximum of 90 minutes. The questions will not be limited solely to material covered in classes the student has taken or in recitals the student has given. Questions will test the application of a student's knowledge as well as the recall of facts and theory. In order for the student to pass the examination, a 2/3 passing vote is required by the committee. Voting is done by secret ballot. Students will learn if they passed or failed the exam, but will not be told the final vote tally. A candidate who fails the examination may be granted a second examination after a period of at least one week upon the recommendation of the committee. The results of the second oral examination are final and, if failed, the student will be asked to withdraw from the program.



Section 2 – MM Program Requirements Student Learning Objectives

SLO 1: Graduates with a M.M. in Choral Conducting will be able to describe and discuss a wide breadth of choral literature.

SLO 2: Graduates with a M.M. in Choral Conducting will be able to produce advanced, expressive, and communicative conducting gestures in performance and rehearsal.

SLO 3: Graduates with a M.M. in Choral Conducting will be able to apply detailed score study skills, leading to advanced choral rehearsal techniques.

SLO 4: Graduates with a M.M. in Choral Conducting will perform with advanced levels of comprehensive musicianship as singing members of choral ensembles.

Section 2 – MM Program Requirements Transfer of Credit

A maximum of eight (8) credits completed at another accredited institution prior to entering the program may be considered for transfer to meet degree requirements if the course work was:

- graded "B-" or higher
- taken within the last four years
- comparable in content and approach to those in the Simpson College Master of Music in Choral Conducting degree program
- acceptable at the granting institution toward a graduate degree there
- not used to fulfill requirements for a previously granted degree

Section 3 – Program Timeline Course of Study

The following is the preferred course of study for the MM program.

Summer 1	Credits
MUS 501/2/3: Choral Literature (1, 2, or 3)	4
MUS 511/2/3: Seminar in Choral Conducting 1	2
MUS 521: Topics in Music History and Literature	2
MUS 551: Vocal Pedagogy in the Choral Setting	2
MUS 541: Graduate Choral Ensemble	1
MUS 561: Concert Conducting	1
Total	12

Summer 2	Credits
MUS 501/2/3: Choral Literature (1, 2, or 3)	4
MUS 511/2/3: Seminar in Choral Conducting 2	2
MUS 531: Music Theory	4
MUS 541: Graduate Choral Ensemble	1
MUS 561: Concert Conducting	1
Total	12

Summer 3	Credits
MUS 501/2/3: Choral Literature (1, 2, or 3)	4
MUS 511/2/3: Seminar in Choral Conducting 3	2
MUS 552 & 553: Choral Diction (1 & 2)	2
MUS 542: Advanced Musicianship Training	1
MUS 541: Graduate Choral Ensemble	1
MUS 561: Concert Conducting	1
MUS 571: Master's Oral Comprehensive Exam	1
Total	12