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INTRODUCTION FROM THE HEAD OF CHORAL CONDUCTING

Started in 1997, the Academy’s Choral Conducting course (originally entitled Choral Direction & Church Music) was the first specialist postgraduate choral conducting course in the UK. The two-year course culminates in the award of a Postgraduate Diploma or MA, with a MMus available for selected students.

The distinctive feature of the course is that it takes the modern British sacred choral performance tradition (both English and Latin) as its stylistic and repertoire basis, and as a framework for exploration of a broad sweep of European sacred repertoire, related secular music and informed performance practices. As well as specialist technical and interpretative studies the course also includes contextual study in selected areas of liturgical music that are vital to a practical understanding of the Western sacred art-music tradition.

Students observe a variety of choral groups, taking advantage of the outstandingly diverse range of opportunities that London offers. There are close working relationships with the adult professional and children’s choirs of the London Oratory, the BBC Singers, the National Youth Chamber Choir, the Choir of Royal Holloway, University of London, the Joyful Company of Singers, the Renaissance Singers and the Music Makers of London. Eminent choral conductors who have recently taught on the course include Simon Carrington (Professor Emeritus, Yale University), Timo Nuoranne (Düsseldorf Hochschule), Mats Nilsson (Royal College of Music, Stockholm), James Burton (Oxford Schola Cantorum and former chorusmaster of the Halle Choir), and Ben Parry (London Voices and National Youth Choir of Great Britain). Visiting Professor Prof. Roland Börger (Head of Choral Conducting at the Leipzig Hochschule) gives intensive interpretation and technique classes bi-ennially based mainly on the German tradition. In addition, our two other Visiting Professors, Dr David Hill (BBC Singers, the Bach Choir and Yale University Schola Cantorum) and Dr James O’Donnell (Westminster Abbey) regularly give masterclasses. Distinguished staff members Paul Brough and Jeremy Summerly work closely with students at selected points of the year. The department has strong links with the conservatoires in Leipzig and Stockholm, and works annually at Neresheim Abbey in southern Germany.

Crucial to the successful student’s experience in the Academy will be his or her own ability to generate their own choral activity inside and outside the Academy, to develop early professional attitudes and relationships, to devise characteristic and interesting projects and to demonstrate the energy, diplomacy and persistence to bring their music-making into the public arena, whether in service or concert.

Patrick Russill
Head of Choral Conducting
Department contacts

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Patrick Russill MA, Hon RAM, Hon FRCO, Hon FGCM 020 7873 7331 p.russill@ram.ac.uk
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Departmental Administrator
Alison Booker a.booker@ram.ac.uk
Room 108

Programme Contacts

Head of Postgraduate Programmes
Neil Heyde n.heyde@ram.ac.uk
Room G81

Programme Tutor
Harry Blake: h.blake@ram.ac.uk
Room 278

Key dates 2015-2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer term</td>
<td>Mon 18th April – Sun 10th July 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Period</td>
<td>Mon 23rd May – Fri 9th June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic hand-in for ’Gregorian chant'</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You are expected to attend all timetabled activities and academic classes. Absences may affect your progression to the next stage of your programme of study.

You must refer to this department handbook in conjunction with the Postgraduate Programme Handbook which details all of the relevant information on what you need to do in the completion of your MA/MMus/Professional Diploma/Advanced Diploma.

Choral Conducting Department Staff

Department Staff
Patrick Russill MA, Hon RAM, Hon FRCO, Hon FGCM (Head of Department)
Alex Ashworth MA, DipRAM, PGDip, LRAM (Vocal Technique)
tbc (Aural Skills)
Cathal Garvey BMus, MA, LTCL (Baton Technique)
Paul Brough MA, ARAM
Jeremy Summerly MA, MMus, HonRAM

Visiting Professors
Professor Roland Börger Hon ARAM (Leipzig Hochschule für Musik und Theater)
David Hill Hon DMus, MA, FRCO, Hon RAM (BBC Singers, Bach Choir and Yale University)
James O’Donnell KCSG, Hon DMus, MA, FRCO, Hon RAM (Westminster Abbey)
LEAVE OF ABSENCE PROCEDURE

You will need to apply for Leave of Absence if you are going to take any time away from the Academy during the term, regardless of whether or not you will miss any Academy activities (academic classes, rehearsals) which are part of your schedule of study. Leave of Absence will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and can be applied for by filling out a Leave of Absence form (available on AIR and from the General Office).

Some guidance on completing a Leave of Absence form:

- You must apply for Leave of Absence and obtain all relevant signatures as far in advance as possible.
- It is your responsibility to check the dates of your assessments and to collect these signatures.
- Your Tutor will notify you via email once the process is complete.
- You may not go on leave until you have received this notification from your Tutor.
- If it is subsequently found that you have missed a timetabled assessment for which the date had been published in advance, but that you have not declared on this form, then you will be automatically referred (failed) in the relevant component.
- You must inform your Principal Study teacher **before** signing this form and collecting the signatures.
- In the case of emergencies or last minute external opportunities, go straight to your Tutor who will advise you accordingly.

In addition to filling out a Leave of Absence form, you should inform other relevant lecturer(s) or professor(s) that you have been granted Leave of Absence from a particular class, lesson, rehearsal, or performance.

Any regular timetable clashes must be brought to the attention of your Tutor immediately.

If you are ill and will miss a class or activity, you should contact the relevant module leader, professor, coach or director. Visit your doctor in order to obtain a medical certificate. When you return to the Academy you should report to your Tutor as soon as possible.

Academic classes are suspended for one week each term, but your presence will still be required for performance-based activities. Any Leave of Absence requests for this time must be applied for in the usual way.

Please note that the summer term does not end until **10 July 2016**. You will therefore be expected to be available to attend any end of year tutorial interviews or to collect any correspondence that is left in your pigeon hole up until this date. The Academy will not be responsible for any information which a student fails to receive in the event that they left the Academy early without making appropriate arrangements.
SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES PROCEDURE

Special Circumstances Committee considers applications from students in accordance with the Special Circumstances Regulations, for the following reasons:

- extenuating circumstances which may have affected student performance in assessments
- extensions to deadlines for the submission of work for assessment
- the deferral of assessments
- appeals against penalty marks where the reasons were beyond your control.

You must submit a completed application form no later than 10 working days from the imposition of a penalty mark; 10 working days before the published deadline for submission of academic work, or 10 working days before the published date of an assessment†.

Please note that retrospective extensions and waiving of lateness penalties will not be permitted except in very serious cases and where you have provided evidence to explain why you were unable to submit within the required timeframe.

1. Applications must be signed by you and your Tutor and be accompanied by supporting evidence before it is submitted to the Academic Secretary. If the form is missing either signature, it will be returned to your pigeon hole.
2. If your form requires medical evidence to be provided, you will be given a deadline to provide this. If you do not meet this deadline without good reason then your application will be dismissed.
3. If you are citing a medical issue, you must provide relevant evidence from a medical practitioner which confirms the relevant timescales and a formal diagnosis. A letter which merely states that you visited the practice will not be accepted.
4. SCC will normally consider cases on a weekly basis during the term (on a Wednesday afternoon) and, when deemed appropriate, information from the student’s Tutor, the Concerts Department or any other Academy department shall be sought prior to the meeting.
5. SCC will either accept or reject the application and agree any particulars in relation to extensions or penalties as appropriate. When applications are rejected, a full explanation will be given.
6. Students will normally be informed of the outcome within two working days of the meeting by the Chair of the Committee via Academy email* and their Tutor and other relevant members of staff (i.e. Module Leaders) copied in.
7. The case outcomes are circulated, normally within 2 working days of the meeting, to representatives from the Registry so that a note of the outcome can be placed on the student file.
8. Students have the right of appeal against decisions of the Special Circumstances Committee; via the Academic Appeals Procedure (see the Regulations).

* All correspondence documenting the outcome of applications will be copied to the relevant Registry staff, relevant Tutor and any Module Leaders/other administrative staff concerned.
†If you are making an application for a deferral of an assessment due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness on the day of the assessment, you must provide an application with supporting medical evidence within five working days of the assessment taking place.

Please see the guidelines on AIR for further information on making applications.
ASIMUT

You must check your ASIMUT account daily for details of your academic and departmental classes and activities.

It is a disciplinary offence to book two or more spaces concurrently in ASIMUT. Any student shown by the ASIMUT usage statistics to be misusing the system in this way will be liable to a disciplinary penalty, ranging from a temporary ban from the room booking system to temporary suspension of the studentship, depending on the severity of the case. Penalties will be determined by the Programme Management Team and communicated to students by their Programme Tutor.

STUDENT RECORDINGS

You can access recordings or large scale public performances from the Library for educational purposes. The Academy cannot provide you with your own copies of these performances for copyright and resource reasons.

Exceptions may be made in the case of performances with rarity value such as concertos but requests must be submitted to the Concerts Department at least one calendar month in advance of the performance. This will allow the Concerts Department time to consider any copyright clearance issues/licences/costs involved and for the Recording Studio staff to allocate time in their schedule and recording equipment.

If the Academy is not planning to record a performance that you are performing in (e.g. Tuesday lunchtime concerts), requests may be made by students to record it but in audio format. In order to request this you will need to ensure that all relevant consent forms and copyright clearance is completed at least one calendar month in advance of the performance.

You are able to record yourselves on Academy premises (in practice rooms and concert venues) either using their own or loaned equipment (in this case you would retain the copyright on the recordings and accept all responsibility for any necessary copyright clearance required).
The first year’s curriculum is intended to lay firm technical foundations, enabling the student to express well-considered musical intentions with gestural explicitness and economy. The relationship between singing technique and conducting technique, especially as regards energy, relaxation and poise in breathing is a fundamental concern in this year.

**Professional Development Activity**

Compulsory attendance and satisfactory professorial report is required for all of the following:

**Principal study:**
Choral Conducting Technique and Interpretation

**Related Studies:**
Vocal technique
Baton technique
Aural skills

**Performance classes:**
Choir Training class
Masterclasses

**Department specific Pathway within the Professional Portfolio**

This comprises the Church Music academic elective as listed in the *BMus Handbook 2015 – 2016* and is marked as prescribed there. For 2015-16 this is ‘Gregorian chant’. A Pass is required for progression to the Final Year. The class is on Tuesdays at 11.45am to 1.15pm in Aybrook Street (AS) 110.

**Summer term end of year assessment**

A 20 minute rehearsal and performance of one a capella work, to be agreed with the Head of Choral Conducting. The assessment will reflect equally the effectiveness of the rehearsal in moving towards a communicative performance and the technical and interpretative skill of the director in the performance.
Building on the first year’s technical foundations, the curriculum seeks to challenge the conductor’s imaginative inner ear and ability to communicate this in word and gesture, with especial attention to the principles of action and reaction that release singers into corporate expressiveness.

Principal Study

Final performances

Final Recital:
A rehearsal and ensuing performance with the Academy Chamber Choir of an 8-10 minute a capella programme.

A maximum rehearsal period of 65 minutes, which must include one 5-minute break for the singers, is allowed. Candidates may opt, if they wish and if convenient, to start the rehearsal in a room other than the performance room and to use the 5 minute break to move to the performance room, where the rehearsal may be continued as allotted time permits. Only the performance room will be open to the public.

While the rehearsal itself will not be assessed, the merits and deficiencies of the Final Performance will be evaluated in the light of the evidence of the rehearsal. The examiners will note in particular the initial and final standard of the choir, problems identified and addressed, good practices either established or affirmed and the characteristics of rehearsal manner which impact on the final performance.

There is no memory requirement.

The programme, which should complement that of the External concert (see below), must be submitted for approval by the Head of Choral Conducting at least 4 weeks before the performance. Typed programmes including complete texts with English translations must be prepared for the recital and given to the steward for distribution to audience and examiners.

External concert (Faculty-specific Concerto equivalent):
A self-generated and/or self-promoted choral or consort concert, usually given outside the Academy and approved by the Head of Choral Conducting, of 40 minutes or longer which may also include non-choral items, as long as the choral component is of not less than 25 minutes duration. Standard of public presentation and enterprise of programming will be taken into account. This concert should usually take place prior to the Final Recital\(^1\).

Final Recital Programming

Your choice of repertoire can have an impact on the mark awarded for the Final Recital. Although it is important you do not set yourself challenges beyond your reach, you should also recognize that rising to challenges can be an important element in meeting the criteria for marks in the higher categories. The programme choice is your responsibility, but it should be discussed with your Principal Study teacher and you may also wish to discuss it with your Head of Study.

\(^1\)Percentage weighting: Final Recital 67%, Concert 33%
Professional Development Activity Reports

The following compulsory elements are assessed by professorial report:

Principal study:
Choral Conducting Technique and Interpretation

Related Studies:
Baton technique
Vocal technique
Aural skills

Performance classes:
Choir Training class (F/A)*
Masterclasses

*F/A – Formatively Assessed

Department-specific Pathway within the Professional Portfolio

This comprises the Church Music academic elective as listed in the BMus Handbook 2015 – 2016 and is marked as prescribed there. For 2015-16 this is ‘Gregorian Chant’. This Pathway is given an indicative mark, whilst being assessed holistically within the Professional Portfolio. The class is on Tuesdays at 11.45am to 1.15pm in Aybrook Street (AS) 110.
‘Professional Development Activity’ is at the core of your Academy experience and we expect it will form the backbone of your Professional Portfolio. Apart from your individual practice and work with your teacher, it is likely to account for most of the time you spend working at the Academy.

It is formatively assessed (thus does not directly contribute to your degree result, which is determined by final assessments only), but you must pass in order to gain the necessary credits for the degree. Your transcript will record a single Professional Development Activity Profile mark.

There are five key areas, which each department handles differently according to professional preparation requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS ONE (Technical)</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS (including minimum required to pass)</th>
<th>Feedback mark (Y/N)</th>
<th>Written report (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-year students (1st year)</td>
<td>Baton technique, Aural, Vocal Techniques</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year students (2nd year)</td>
<td>Baton technique, Aural, Vocal Techniques</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-year students</td>
<td>Baton technique, Aural, Vocal Techniques</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS TWO (Synthetic)</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS (including minimum required to pass)</th>
<th>Feedback mark (Y/N)</th>
<th>Written report (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-year students (1st year)</td>
<td>Principal study classes (Choral Conducting Technique and Interpretation) are synthetic</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year students (2nd year)</td>
<td>Principal study classes (Choral Conducting Technique and Interpretation) are synthetic</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-year students</td>
<td>Principal study classes (Choral Conducting Technique and Interpretation) are synthetic</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES (Masterclasses etc.)</td>
<td>REQUIREMENTS (including minimum required to pass)</td>
<td>Feedback mark (Y/N)</td>
<td>Written report (Y/N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year students (1st year)</td>
<td>Masterclasses (external professors), performance classes (internal professors, except HoD where assessment is part of principal-study report)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year students (2nd year)</td>
<td>Masterclasses (external professors), performance classes (internal professors, except HoD where assessment is part of principal-study report)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-year students</td>
<td>Masterclasses (external professors), performance classes (internal professors, except HoD where assessment is part of principal-study report)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLABORATIVE WORK</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS (including minimum required to pass)</th>
<th>Feedback mark (Y/N)</th>
<th>Written report (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-year students (1st year)</td>
<td>Choir-Training class: Pass/Fail only</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year students (2nd year)</td>
<td>Choir-Training class: Pass/Fail only</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-year students</td>
<td>Choir-Training class: Pass/Fail only</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-GENERATED PERFORMANCE or RECORDING</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS (including minimum required to pass)</th>
<th>Feedback mark (Y/N)</th>
<th>Written report (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-year students (1st year)</td>
<td>Concert or Service (or part thereof)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year students (2nd year)</td>
<td>No requirement (Concerto-equivalent concert is part of Final Performance)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-year students</td>
<td>No requirement (Concerto-equivalent concert is part of Final Performance)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
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</table>