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MA Music: Choral Conducting pathway

This unique pathway in Choral Conducting is directed by Professor Simon Halsey and is in association with the CBSO and its internationally renowned choruses and conductors. Key elements of the course include directed podium time with University Ensembles, weekly sessions focusing on score preparation, symphonic repertoire, and conducting techniques, singing with the CBSO Chorus, and assisting CBSO Youth and Community choruses.

Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham has been awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)

Course fact file

Type of Course: Taught

Study Options: Full time, part time

Duration: 1 year full-time; 2 years part-time

Start date: September

Contact

Dr Eliot Bates
Email: **e.bates@bham.ac.uk (mailto:e.bates@bham.ac.uk)**

School of Languages, Cultures, Art History and Music (/schools/lcahm/index.aspx)

Department of Music (/schools/lcahm/departments/music/index.aspx)

Details

The programme will allow you to have significant directed podium time with University ensembles as well as undertaking singing lessons, sing in Birmingham University Singers, sing in the CBSO Chorus and act as assistant conductor to two University choirs. Additional podium time will be available at the discretion of the Director of Choral Activities.

You will study two core modules:

- Choral Conducting
- Music Research Colloquium

You will also choose two optional modules and complete a final recital, which will take the form of a substantial solo recital or a substantial concert of choral repertoire. The recital offers you the opportunity to unite practical and theoretical musicianship, and to demonstrate the ability to plan and independently prepare (with some supervision) a performance at an advanced level.

Why study this course

You will benefit from Conducting Masterclasses in association with Birmingham Conservatoire as well as following follow the work of the CBSO Youth Choruses (3 choirs). You also get the opportunity to observe the choral ensembles in Birmingham (notably Ex Cathedra, Black Voices, Birmingham Opera Company and the local cathedrals) and be examined by a final recital as conductor of either BUS or the University Choir.

You will also have the chance to audition for the conductorship of all UMS ensembles.

The city of Birmingham has been a significant national and international centre of choral excellence for over two hundred years and is the birthplace of works as important as Mendelssohn's Elijah, Dvorak's Requiem and Elgar's The Dream of Gerontius. Vaughan Williams, Britten and Tippett often worked here. More recently, Birmingham has become a hotspot of compositional invention and a world-leader in community and education work.

Choral music is particularly active today and the University, by appointing Simon Halsey (Chorus Director, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra/Chief Conductor, Berlin Radio Choir) to the new post of Director of Choral Activities, seeks to take its place at the centre of the city's vibrant and kaleidoscopic choral culture.

Modules

You will study two core modules:

Choral Conducting

The module introduces you to the techniques and methods of choral conducting, working with consorts, chamber groups and large symphonic choirs, including singing skills and vocal warm up techniques.

Music Research Colloquium

You will attend approximately 14 research seminars, most delivered by invited speakers in the Music Department's research seminar series. Department staff will lead several review sessions. There will be approximately six seminars on library research skills, information retrieval and music-related software.

You will also choose two optional modules from the following:

Special Study in Music

You will undertake a special study of a particular field of their choice under the direction of the leader of your pathway, which will typically require attendance at an appropriate series of lectures or tutorials as well as independent reading and research. Topics for study might include: vocalists in the Baroque era; topics in music analysis; or topics in critical musicology.

Introduction to Musicology

This module examines issues that are exercising musicologists in the modern discipline, with a view to preparing you to conduct original research and ultimatly prepare you for the profession. It is taught as a series of seminars by various members of staff, each introducing a topic related to their own research expertise.

Sound in Society

This module provides an introduction to the field of Sound Studies, including both the conceptual framework as well as practical techniques. We will begin with an overview of the field and its formation in 2004 through a consideration of the work of Trevor Pinch, Karin Bijsterveld and R Murray Schafer. Subsequent weeks will cover topics such as: soundscapes; sound and the animal world; noise and silence in philosophy; the engineering of sound; sound and radio art; and synaesthesia research in cognitive psychology.

British Music Studies

This module takes the broadest perspective on modern British art music, offering case studies in the work of the 'great composers' of the tonal idiom such as Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Britten, evaluation of the Anglican choral tradition and the British symphonic tradition, examination of the problematic status of modernism in British music before 1960, and criticism of modernist and postmodernist composition since World War II. Approaches are critical, analytical and sociological, with some reception history as well. The repertory under study is mainly choral, orchestral and chamber music.

Gender and Music

The field of gender studies is a very important area of focus in musicological and ethnomusicological research. This module is divided into two parts: a ten-week seminar on gender studies in general followed by an independent study during which you will apply learned information from the seminar to a chosen essay topic in the discipline of music. The seminar will focus on the interdisciplinary and cross-cultural aspects of gender studies and feminist theories. You will be introduced to a range of theoretical and methodological issues and debates that have characterised the development of gender studies in the twentieth century. You will also be introduced to the ontological, epistemological and methodological issues that arise in feminist scholarship. You will engage with the study of these issues both as analytical categories and approaches within the social sciences. During your independent study, you will meet with an advisor to create an appropriate project that will enable you to apply the general knowledge of gender studies and feminist theories specifically to research in the discipline of music.

Analysis of Music 1770–1910

This module explores major compositions of the Classical and Romantic traditions and explains the main analytical techniques that have been developed for understanding them over the last two decades. These include theories of formal functions (William E. Caplin), 'dialogic' form' (James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy), metrical conflict (Harald Krebs, Richard Cohn), and 'second practice' tonality.

Music, Place and Identity

This module is concerned with understanding the relation of music to concepts of place and identity. In addition to a broad theoretical overview of topics related to place (including theories of locality, nationalism, transnationalism, diasporas, and indigeneity) as developed in fields as diverse as history, cultural geography and anthropology, the module will cover seminal ethno/musicological works on how musics inscribe place-based senses of cultural belonging. Topics and examples may include: occupation and cross-cultural collaborations in Palestine/Israel; transnationalism and cultural diplomacy in the Eurovision Song Contest; music and governmentality in the Caribbean; contemporary Native American and First Nations indigenous musics; European art music and colonialism; diasporic South Asian music in the UK; the role of music in the Arab Spring; and music in Birmingham.

Ensemble Performance

This is a module for advanced performers who are approaching a professional standard i.e. who might soon be engaged to give a public performances for a paying audience, including ensemble performances. Performing in an ensemble situation will develop skills necessary for your professional development. You will be required to join attend all rehearsals, dress rehearsals and performances for either 1) a University Music Department Ensemble or University Music Society Ensemble that meets in semester 1 and 2 or, 2) two University Music Department Ensembles or University Music Society Ensembles that meets only one semester.

Studies in Performance Practice

This module combines the disciplines of musicology and performance, introducing you to the main topics in performance practice of western music. Case studies are devoted to Baroque, Classical, Romantic and twentieth-century music. The module will instruct develop the skills necessary for the PhD in Performance Practice. Topics covered may include organology, rhythm and tempo, articulation, pitch and temperaments, notation, the history of recorded performance and debates around 'authenticity' in performance.

Fees and funding

We charge an annual tuition fee. Fees for 2015/16 are as follows:

- Home/EU: £7,560 full-time; £3,780 part-time
- Overseas: £15,490 full-time

For part-time students, the above fee quoted is for year one only and tuition fees will also be payable in year two of your programme.

Tuition fees can either be paid in full or by instalments.

Eligibility for Home/EU or Overseas fees can be verified with Admissions. Learn more about **fees for international students (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/International/students/finance/fees.aspx)** .

Learn more about **postgraduate tuition fees and funding (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/pgt-fees/index.aspx)** .

Scholarships and studentships

Scholarships to cover fees and/or maintenance costs may be available. To discover whether you are eligible for any award across the University, and to start your funding application, please visit the University's **Postgraduate Funding Database (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx)** .

International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

Entry requirements

Learn more about **entry requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx)**

International students

Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications; our **country pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx)** show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

English language requirements

You can satisfy our English language requirements in two ways:

- by holding an **English language qualification (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx)** to the right level
- by taking and successfully completing one of our **English courses for international students (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx)**

How to apply

Before you make your application

You may wish to **register your interest with us (https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate)** to receive regular news and updates on postgraduate life within this Department and the wider University.

Making your application

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the **How to apply pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx)**

Apply now (https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL095.htm)

Related news and events

Simon Halsey appointed to new role at University of Birmingham (/news/latest/2012/05/16-May-12-Simon-Halsey-appointed-to-new-role-at-University-of-Birmingham.aspx)

Learning and teaching

Your learning will be enhanced by our extensive facilities, including the new **Bramall Music Building (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/bramall/index.aspx)** and the **Barber Music Library (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/libraries/subject/music.aspx)** .

You will also become part of, and contribute to, the vibrant international community of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, which offers dedicated research resources and a supportive working environment. Our team of academic and operational staff are on hand to offer support and advice to all postgraduate students within the College.

Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx)** which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

International students can access support through the **English for International Students Unit (EISU) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/insessional/index.aspx)** .

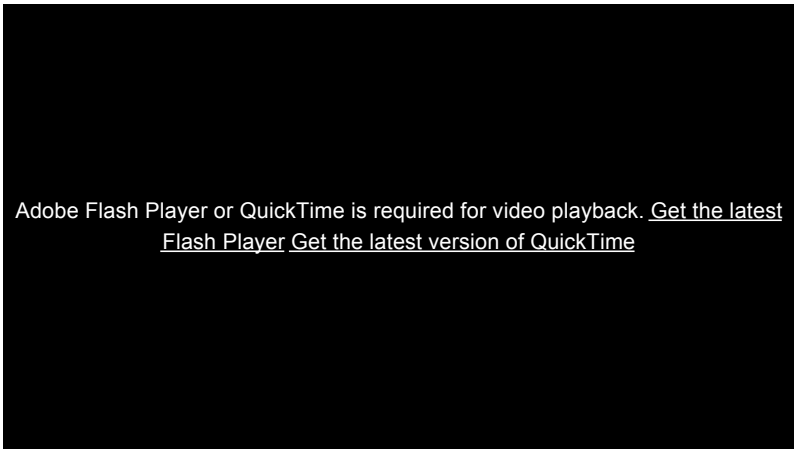
Related staff

Dr Matthew Riley (/staff/profiles/music/riley-matthew.aspx)

Employability

The University of Birmingham has been ranked 8th in the UK and 60th in the world for post-qualification employability in the latest global survey of universities commissioned by the International Herald Tribune.

Your degree will provide excellent preparation for employment and this will be further enhanced by the employability skills training offered through the College of Arts and Law Graduate School.



Birmingham?s Music postgraduates work in a wide range of careers within and beyond the music world. A postgraduate degree in Music develops a broad base of skills including general skills such as communication, problem solving and research, and also specific skills developed by practice and performance such as self-management, team work and presentation.

Over the past five years, 96% of Music postgraduates were in work and/or further study six months after graduation. Whilst some graduates pursue music-related careers, others choose to use their transferable skills to follow career paths in fields including finance, the media and the public sector. Employers that graduates have gone on to work for include: Arts Council England; BBC; Birmingham Conservatoire; Birmingham Contemporary Music Group; Coventry City Council Performing Arts Service; Lancaster University; National Opera Studio; National Orchestra; Raffles Institution; and Royal Northern College of Music.

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