

Music, MM

Specialization(s): Piano Performance and Pedagogy; Performance; Conducting

Department: Music Department

College: Caine College of the Arts

Overview

About This Degree

The Master of Music degree has three specializations: Piano Performance and Pedagogy, Performance and Conducting.

Master of Music students have the opportunity to acquire comprehensive knowledge in their emphasis through research and both classroom and individualized instruction, to develop and practice professional skills and to gain leadership experience.

The primary purpose of the Piano Performance and Pedagogy degree is to integrate instruction in piano pedagogy with high-level piano performance, making it a unique degree, as many MM programs in piano require students to specialize in either pedagogy or performance. The program is designed to fill an increasing demand for piano instructors who not only perform at a high level, but who also hold advanced credentials in teaching. Piano Performance and Pedagogy candidates also receive experiential training through the USU Youth Conservatory, a pre-college piano program providing instruction to students ages 4 through 18.

The Performance emphasis focuses on individual instruction, ensemble performance and advisor-approved independent study which focuses on the student's career and educational objectives. Performance candidates are required to present two, 2-credit recitals in partial fulfillment of this degree.

The Conducting emphasis focuses on ensemble performance, advanced conducting and rehearsal techniques, repertory and literature, and advisor-approved independent study which focuses on the student's career and educational objectives. Individual recital(s) and/or Research and Presentation project(s) are required of Conducting emphasis candidates.

Specific questions about each emphasis and course of study should be directed to the graduate faculty in the preferred emphasis.

Career Options

Graduates with the MM typically pursue careers as piano teachers and performers. They are also prepared to pursue doctoral degrees; either the doctor of musical arts (DMA), which is focused on performance, or the doctor of philosophy (PhD), which focuses more on academia.

What it takes

Admissions Requirements

It is preferred that applicants have an undergraduate degree in music with an emphasis in piano.

Application Requirements:

- Complete the [online application](#)
- Pay the \$55 application fee
- Score at or above the 40th percentile on the GRE
- Have a 3.0 or higher GPA on your last 60 semester or 90 quarter credits
- Provide transcripts of all college/university credits
- Provide three contacts for letters of recommendation
- The Music Department requires students to audition in front of an entrance committee comprised of members of the piano faculty. If a live audition at the USU campus is impractical, applicants may send an audio-visual recording that demonstrates their level of proficiency with regard to piano performance.

International students have [additional admissions requirements](#).

Admissions Deadlines

Students are accepted throughout the year; however, it is recommended that students seeking financial assistance apply before March 1.

Master's Degree Plan Options

Students can receive the MM by pursuing the following option:

- The **Plan C** option does not involve a thesis or a defense meeting and is comprised of coursework only, including a terminal recital.

Financial Assistance

Select students will be offered department-funded graduate [assistantship](#) positions. After completing departmental requirements, these students will be eligible to teach courses in the undergraduate curriculum for music majors and minors, including music theory, aural skills, and keyboard harmony. All graduate students, including those who do not receive an assistantship position, have the opportunity to provide private piano instruction to nonmajors, for which they will receive compensation.

A variety of additional funding opportunities are available, including [fellowships](#), [scholarships](#), [tuition awards](#), and [travel support](#). Additionally, students may be eligible for subsidized [health insurance](#) through qualifying assistantships.

Program Requirements

[Click here](#) to see course requirements for the **Master of Music**.

Contact

Advisor(s)

Dennis Hirst

Associate Professor

Office: FAC 203

Phone: (435) 797-3257

Email: dennis.hirst@usu.edu

Faculty

Gary Amano, MM, Juilliard School of Music

Professor

Area: Piano theory

Office: FAC 201

Phone: (435) 797-3028

Email: gary.amano@usu.edu

Sergio Bernal, MM, University of Michigan and Yale University

Associate Professor

Area: Theory, composition

Office: FAC 218 A

Phone: (435) 797-0487

Email: sergio.bernal@usu.edu

Dennis Hirst, MM, University of Oklahoma
Associate Professor
Area: Piano, theory
Office: FAC 203
Phone: (435) 797-3257
Email: dennis.hirst@usu.edu

Kevin Olson, EdD, National-Louis University
Assistant Professor, Director of USU Youth Conservatory
Area: Piano, composition
Office: FAC 101
Phone: (435) 797-3033
Email: kevin.olson@usu.edu

Christopher Scheer, PhD, University of Michigan
Assistant Professor
Area: Musicology, music history
Office: FAC 204
Phone: (435) 797-8706
Email: christopher.scheer@usu.edu

Get Involved

Professional Organizations, Honor Societies, and Clubs

Music Teachers National Association: MTNA is a nonprofit organization of more than 24,000 music teachers, independent and collegiate, who share the vision of furthering the art of music through programs that encourage and support teaching and performance.

Utah Music Teachers Association: UMTA, a chapter of Music Teachers National Association, is a nonprofit organization of more than 600 music teachers across the state. Through monthly meetings and workshops, members are able to create a support network and exchange ideas about how to improve their teaching.

Labs, Centers, Research

Caine Lyric Theatre: The Caine Lyric Theatre is located in downtown Logan. The 378-seat proscenium theatre, listed on the Utah State Historical Register (1913), is home to the Old Lyric Repertory Company and hosts USU Opera program performances.

Kent Concert Hall: The Kent Concert Hall, located in the Chase Fine Arts Center, seats 2,168 patrons in five orchestra sections and five balcony sections. It has a proscenium stage and an apron that can be removed to reveal the orchestra pit at the front of the stage. The Kent Concert Hall is most specifically designed for orchestra programs and features a full-stage acoustical shell as part of the standard-stage setup.

Manon Caine Russell Kathryn Caine Wanlass Performance Hall: The Performance Hall is a 20,000-square-foot building that serves USU, the Cache Valley community, and the Intermountain region. The venue features a 400-seat performance hall, a stage for up to 22 performers, and a lobby with glass windows overlooking a plaza. The hall's intimate scale is ideal for small acoustical performances, such as chamber music, vocal and instrumental concerts, recitals, readings, and lectures.

Morgan Theatre: A 670-seat thrust theatre is used for plays and small concerts and performances. The Morgan Theatre is the main performance venue for the USU Theatre Department. It also serves as a wonderful venue for music, dance, or conferences that want a more intimate performance venue.

Youth Conservatory: The Youth Conservatory serves as a lab program for USU piano pedagogy students to hone

their teaching skills and receive faculty guidance in applied teaching situations. More than 300 pianists, ages 4–18, of varying abilities and backgrounds, come to the Chase Fine Arts Center for piano lessons and musicianship classes each week.