MUSICAL ARTS - DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS (DMA)

The DMA degree programs at CU Boulder are modeled after the guiding principles outlined by the National Association of Schools of Music. As defined by the NASM, the Doctor of Musical Arts degree is intended for those seeking “the highest level of professional practice emphasizing the creation or performance of musical works and the application and transmission of knowledge about musical works, or pedagogy. . . . Creation, performance, and teaching are highly disciplined efforts; inquiry and investigation, and often research and scholarship, are components of performance practice” (NASM Handbook, 2016-17: 135).

This professional degree is intended for composers, conductors, and performers who possess both creative and scholarly abilities. Graduates of this program go on to careers as composers and performers in solo, chamber music, opera, jazz, or orchestra, or as choral, jazz, band and/or orchestral conductors. A particular focus of the DMA is the preparation for a career as a college, conservatory, or university teacher. Students work closely with an advisor in developing a degree plan that reflects their needs and interests. This degree requires a minimum of 30 hours beyond the master’s level, including 12 hours in seminar and other coursework, and a minimum of 18 hours of performance and written projects (constituting the dissertation portion of the degree).

For outlines of specific programs, visit the college’s Degrees (http://www.colorado.edu/music/academics/graduate-advising/degrees) webpage or contact the Music Graduate Studies office, 303-492-2207 or gradmusic@colorado.edu.

Requirements

Prerequisites

Entrance requirements include a master’s degree in music or demonstrated background comparable to that of the master of music degree at this university. All graduate applicants must complete an audition, interview, or some other demonstration of their ability in the major field. If at all possible, a visit to the campus is strongly encouraged. As part of the application, composition majors should upload representative scores and recordings (to the digital portfolio tab on the application), and a list of completed compositions. Performance majors should submit a repertoire list and arrange for a personal audition and interview, if at all possible. Some areas require applicants to send a pre-audition screening recording of their performance. Conducting majors must upload a video of a performance. All DMA applicants must also submit a scholarly writing sample that demonstrates ability in critical thinking, appropriate research techniques, and skill in the cogent use of English. For full details concerning audition and application requirements, visit the college’s Prospective Graduate Students (http://www.colorado.edu/music/admissions/prospective-graduate-students) webpage.

Course Requirements

Students must take a minimum of 30 credit hours of coursework, of which at least 18 credit hours are dissertation projects. Students take two doctoral topic classes (at the 6000 level), one each in musicology and music theory; prerequisites are stipulated by the theory and musicology faculties. Some areas require specific coursework prior to or in conjunction with work on dissertation projects. In other instances students may be advised to take coursework in preparation for the comprehensive examination. Applied music instruction may be elected for the duration of the residency requirement.

Advisory Committee

Each DMA program is directed by a five-member advisory committee headed by the major advisor, who is usually the student’s main studio teacher. At least one member must hold the PhD degree in musicology, music theory, or music education.

Residence Requirements

The minimum residence requirement is six semesters of work beyond the attainment of an acceptable bachelor’s degree. Two semesters of residence credit may be allowed for a master’s degree from another institution of approved standing, but at least four semesters of residence credit, two of which must be consecutive in one academic year, must be earned for coursework and/or dissertation work taken at this university.

Not more than one-half semester of residence credit may be earned in a summer session. Students must be registered full-time to earn residence credit. For employed students, only those with one-fourth time or less in work that does not contribute directly to their degree program may earn full residence credit.

Continuous Registration

After the residence requirements for the doctor of musical arts program have been satisfied, a student must enroll for fall and spring semesters of each year until attaining the degree. If a student has enrolled in all required dissertation courses but has still to complete the work, he or she should enroll in TMUS 8019, or TMUS 8029, until the degree is completed.

Degree Plan

A degree plan approved by the advisory committee will be presented to the associate dean for graduate studies no later than the second semester of residence. The student’s major professor is responsible for helping the student formulate this plan. The plan should include designated members of the student’s doctoral committee, projected remedial and supporting coursework, proposed dissertation projects, and tentative dates for the comprehensive and final examinations.

Language Requirement

Each DMA student must satisfy a foreign language requirement, and the one foreign language used to satisfy the requirement must be approved by the student’s advisory committee. Additional language work is required for voice students. The language requirement must be completed before students may take the comprehensive exam. Advanced competence in music technology may be approved as an alternative to the foreign language requirement. Appropriate courses and projects are prescribed by the college’s music technology faculty. International students whose native language is not English are exempt from the requirement.

Dissertation

The DMA dissertation consists of a specified number of performances, projects, and documents. The student’s permanent advisory committee must approve all dissertation projects.

Time Limit

DMA degree work must be completed within six years of first registration.