

Orchestral Conductor Training: An Evaluative Survey of Current International Practice at the Tertiary Level

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Abstract

This doctoral dissertation is the outcome of a research investigation into the training of orchestral conductors in tertiary music institutions around the world.

The project analyses the conducting programs of seven leading tertiary-level schools and searches for the reasons for their success. The analysis has involved examining the practical, structural aspects of different curricula, as well as engaging with the philosophy behind the teaching methods used. In examining a broad cross section of successful international schools with varying pedagogical methods a deeper understanding of the key ingredients for successful conductor training has been obtained.

New primary source materials have been generated in the form of interviews with leading pedagogues, including Jorma Panula, Leif Segerstam, Alexander Polishchuk, Mark Stringer, Johannes Schlaefli, Kenneth Kiesler, Christopher Seaman, John Carewe, James Ross and Markand Thakar. These interviews were carried out by the author and were recorded in Finland, Russia, the United Kingdom, Austria, the United States, and Australia. Quotations from the transcripts of these recorded interviews are used extensively throughout the thesis and form the basis of much of the argument.

The thesis is structured in three parts. Following an introduction and literature review, Part One identifies and investigates the main challenges facing a conducting program and discusses the responses to these challenges by leading pedagogues. Part Two consists of a detailed examination of the curricula and processes of seven leading international tertiary level conducting programs, and identifies the unique features of their respective approaches. Part Three presents comparisons and deductions based on the research presented thus far, and outlines areas that are currently neglected and in need of further research. A detailed proposed course structure for a world-class conducting program for implementation in a tertiary institution is then presented.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Luke Dollman

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