Music in the City of Angels
Viewbook 2021-22
As the music profession changes, the USC Thornton School of Music offers an innovative education that prepares students for careers at the highest level as performers, composers, educators and industry leaders. We do this while making the most of our location in Los Angeles, the nation’s center for creativity and original art of all kinds.

Our three exceptional divisions offer cross-genre experiences unique among the country’s top music schools. As a leading international research institution, USC offers students a rigorous, global education that enriches their artistic and musical development.
“The students are fearless, and I try to encourage that. I say, ‘Hey no one’s done this, so we can’t be measured against anyone but ourselves.’”

– Kevin Lyman, Music Industry associate professor
Classical music is as vibrant as it has ever been, but the profession is changing as musicians develop multifaceted careers. Our curriculum challenges students to develop a distinct artistic voice and create a thriving life and career in music. Our goal? To train artists who will expand classical music’s influence and impact, now and in years to come.

Read more at music.usc.edu/viewbook
Adding Diversity to Orchestras

USC Thornton partners on new fellowship for musicians of color.

USC Thornton is a key part of a rigorous multi-year training program for musicians of color that works to improve diversity in American orchestras. Since 2018, the School has partnered with the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra to select and give practical experience to promising orchestral musicians.

“We Should Start an Ensemble”

New groups are fueled by creative experimentation.

A chamber music series inspired by the mixtape? A large ensemble without a conductor? Recent Thornton classical performance alums are forming groups that expand how music is made and presented. A quartet of strings students created The Mixtape Series, bringing curated playlists to the concert hall. (See photo on facing page.) Delirium Musicum is a leaderless ensemble that welcomes a collaborative approach to interpreting scores.

Choral Conducting Careers Take Off

Multiple opportunities for Jenny Wong and Alexander Lloyd Blake.

Jenny Wong MM ’13, DMA ’17 is now the Associate Artistic Director of the LA Master Chorale. When she conducts, her podium is in famed Disney Hall. While at USC, Alexander Lloyd Blake DMA ’19 founded Torsity, an ensemble that emphasizes social justice. That led to directing the National Children’s Chorus, then chorus master for the LA Opera’s summer camp and a session singer on The Lion King.

“Weigh you monitor the New York arts press, you will quickly understand that Los Angeles is hot. The coast-to-coast current has changed course: young painters, writers and musicians are flocking here.”

- Mark Swed, Los Angeles Times music critic
USC Thornton alumni are well represented on the rosters of major American orchestras, including:

Boston Symphony  
Chicago Symphony  
Cincinnati Symphony  
Detroit Symphony  
Houston Symphony  
Kansas City Symphony  
Los Angeles Philharmonic  
Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra  
Nashville Symphony  
New York Philharmonic  
Pittsburgh Symphony  
Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra  
Seattle Symphony  
San Francisco Symphony

Calling the Instrument Doctors

Instrument repair is a rewarding career beyond the symphony hall.

Several Thornton alums have found satisfying careers as specialists in rejuvenating damaged instruments. We profiled go-to experts in the repair of flutes, violones, basses, doubles basses, and trombones. Some continue to perform and others have made repairs their intriguing, full-time career, surrounding themselves with the instruments they love.

Moving a Season of Performances Online

Video performances become highly visual with images and animation.

When the Student Symphony Orchestra of USC performed Camille Saint-Saëns’ Carnival of the Animals in a summer festival video, it launched an ambitious season online to celebrate its tenth anniversary. The student-run ensemble, which is led by many undergraduates from Thornton and features musicians from across USC, saw remote performances as an opportunity to add visual elements to the music.

Piano, Voice or Composition?

Pianist and baritone Joshua Tan, Outstanding DMA Graduate of 2020, noted that his mentor, Bernadene Blaha, “insisted that I continue wearing my many musical hats, whether as a pianist, choral musician, or composer.” Highlights: Touring the Baltics and Poland with the USC Thornton Chamber Singers and his lecture recital playing piano with extended techniques.

Women Composers Shine

DMA student (below) Leaha Maria Villarreal’s “The Warmth of Other Suns” was performed in the Bang on a Can Marathon; Nina Shekhar MM ’20 earned a fellowship with the Young Musicians Foundation; sophomore composition student Anya Lagman’s “Unravel” had its world premiere with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; and the opera “Enchantress of Numbers” by Juhi Bansal BM ’06, MM ’08, DMA ’12 was chosen by the LA Opera for its school program.

International Delivery! Classical Guitarist

After sending a classical guitar from Spain to a talented Nigerian musician, Mircea Gogoncea realized it would cost less to send a second guitar if he picked it up himself in India and delivered it in person. He did, also delivering eight master classes, six lectures, several jam sessions and one concert—all during three days.

Emails Lead to a Disney Hall Debut

Thomas Mellan BM ’17, MM ’20, an alum in Composition and Organ Studies, briefly met famed organist Cameron Carpenter in 2014, thanks to an introduction from professor emeritus Stephen Hartke. They stayed in touch, with Mellan sending Carpenter his compositions. In 2019, a generous Carpenter shared the Disney Hall stage with Mellan, who played his new work, aptly titled Ballade de l’Impossible.

USC Thornton Vocal Arts & Opera students Geovanna Nichols-Julien, left, and Allen Pearcy Galeana at the famed Millennium Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

USC Thornton School of Music / 2021-2022

86% of USC Thornton undergraduates complete their degrees in six years, but most (73%) graduate in four. The national six-year completion rate is 60%.

Classical Performance & Composition Division

USC Thornton Vocal Arts & Opera students Geovanna Nichols-Julien, left, and Allen Pearcy Galeana at the famed Millennium Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

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Always Innovating Always Collaborating

From Popular Music to Screen Scoring to Jazz Studies, the programs in the Division of Contemporary Music are among the industry’s best and most celebrated. They have always been musical pathfinders, and are also known for their embrace of new technology and creative collaborations with new media, dance, theater and musicians located around the world.

Read more at music.usc.edu/viewbook
“There are so many sides to being a composer in the film industry. The business. The creative. USC does a wonderful job of giving you that whole package.”

- Duncan Thum (‘06, GC ‘13)

A Daring Student in 2019, A GRAMMY Nom in 2020
Joey Messina-Doerning, a groundbreaking student, has a red-hot career.

As a Music Production student, Joey Messina-Doerning eyed the School’s vintage 80-channel SSL mixing console and made an unprecedented request: Could he record the 78-musician USC Thornton Symphony? Thornton faculty including veteran recording engineer Richard McIlvery, and Sharon Lavery, resident conductor of the symphony, helped make it happen. Only one year later, Messina-Doerning received a GRAMMY nomination for Album of the Year as an engineer/mixer on Haim’s ‘Women in Music Pt. III.’

Innovation in Jazz Studies
Jazz Studies faculty member Vince Mendoza riffed off Ornette Coleman’s 1960 Free Jazz album and had students study abstract paintings for inspiration, and then record improvisations. Professor Bob Mintzer and his students also worked on a virtual reality project with the USC Thornton Jazz Orchestra.

Increasing the Number of Black Film Composers
Sony/ATV and Bleeding Fingers support a new scholarship.

Black composers are vastly underrepresented in the film scoring community. Sony/ATV Music Publishing and Bleeding Fingers Music, in partnership with USC Thornton, announced the USC Screen Scoring Diversity Scholarship for Black composition students to enroll in Thornton’s celebrated Screen Scoring program. The scholarship will provide tuition, housing, meals, relocation costs, equipment and software, and includes a professional apprenticeship.

A Meteoric Star of the Music Industry
His career started at USC Thornton, tapping into talent around him.

Justin Lubliner BS ’12 (below left), started a marketing and PR firm while still at Thornton, blogging and doing promotion for EDM artists. Two years after graduation, he had his own record label, Darkroom Records, an imprint at Interscope. The second client he signed was an unknown Billie Eilish. Helping her continue her dazzling rise, Lubliner remains on a fast track.

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Music Industry Students Pivot to Virtual Production
Music Industry students did marketing, logistics, production, ticketing, sponsorship and outreach in the digital space for two big events, while creatively combating attendees’ Zoom fatigue. They pulled off a philanthropic music festival focusing on mental health, as well as a career networking event using the immersive platform Devy World. Both were shepherded by associate professor Kevin Lyman, creator of the Vans Warped Tour.

Pop Students Stay Close, Remotely
Students in the Popular Music program are each other’s most loyal supporters. They go to each other’s gigs, suggest each other for jobs and endlessly collaborate on projects. During a year of remote learning, two upperclassmen organized a game night, inviting all the Pop students to meet the new freshman, as a way to keep the family tradition alive.

Fender Taps Thornton for Online Classes
Studio Guitar faculty and alums created new, bite-sized lessons on Fender Play for learning acoustic or electric guitar, bass or ukulele. Now, thousands have taken the online classes in blues, rock, country, folk and pop. Nine members of the USC Thornton community worked on the project, including Matt Lake (BM ’06, MM ’10, DMA ’18) (below). A few students even had jobs at Fender waiting for them upon graduation.
“Your college journey is going to be uniquely your own. There’s no need to compare your experience with others – not one of you will have the same exact path, and you’ll all branch out in countless directions which will all be incredibly rewarding in different ways. Embrace it!”

– Shelby Wong ’20 (Piano Performance)
USC Thornton integrates leading-edge research in our coursework, from an award-winning podcast on pop, deep dives into Early Music and jazz, the nation’s only Polish Music Center, and innovative strategies in arts leadership. Alumni are working on and off the stage—in higher education and K-12 classrooms, archives, studios, and leadership positions throughout the arts. No one career looks like another, and we train students for success in multiple career paths.

Read more at music.usc.edu/viewbook
Students Aren’t Limited to Their Majors

**Robert Wang personifies how to multiply musical interests at USC Thornton.**

Classical Guitar student Robert Wang BM ’23 expanded his studies into Early Music and Musicology, an example of the many possibilities to study across USC Thornton. He took Music Production classes in basic recording and editing programs, and used the year of remote learning to master pro-level applications, while practicing the Renaissance lute, Baroque lute, Baroque guitar and theorbo.

Musicians Need Technology

**Thornton offers a free class on digital recording to all music students.**

“From today onward, musicians and teachers will have to embrace technology to be successful,” says Jason Yoshida MM’09 DMA ’14, an Early Music lecturer. During the year of remote learning, he taught a free course on digital recording open to all students. Designed so students would not need to buy expensive software, the popular class attracted students studying everything from Medieval music to jazz and pop.

Increasing the Diversity of Instructors

**Acting on student and faculty input, the USC Thornton Board of Councilors created The Voices Fund to amplify the voices of musicians of color in our courses.**

Online-only classes proved to be a plus, allowing more than three dozen busy musicians, such as jazz musician Roscoe Mitchell, to Zoom in from around the world, enriching classes from across the school.

Adding Funk to a Podcast

**Nate Sloan, professor of Musicology, has an award-winning podcast, Switched on Pop, that was lauded in The New Yorker for “charmingly rigorous dissections of Taylor Swift and Weeknd songs, slipping in a fair amount of music history and theory.” He has a special interest in funk music, which he explored in a multimedia article for The New York Times.**

**Faculty Scholarship in Musicology**

Musicology faculty frequently publish and present their research at national conferences. Lisa Cooper Vest released her first book, *Awangarda: Tradition and Modernity in Post-war Polish Music*, late in 2020. Bruce Brown presented papers on the use of vaudevilles, or popular tunes, in an opéra-comique by Gluck and a ballet by Mozart, as well as his archival discovery of an 18th-century Tuscan apothecary’s gargling prescriptions for a young castrato singer.

Designing Their Lives as Artists

**Innovators and entrepreneurs create their own path in Arts Leadership.**

Sustaining an arts collective in a former factory. Promoting underrepresented voices in popular music for social change. Combining podcasts and audible books for an original way to experience literature. These are just a few of the inventive and community-engaging initiatives undertaken by students in USC’s Arts Leadership (ARTL) program. Entrepreneurial, individualized and interdisciplinary, ARTL encourages driven arts innovators and entrepreneurs to bring their aspirations to USC and learn how to create their own opportunities.

Why Should Musicians Mentor?

The USC Thornton Community Engagement Program places USC Thornton majors in local public schools near the University Park Campus to work as mentors and instructors to more than 6,000 students each year. “The only reason I play now is because I was exposed to music at a young age in a public-school setting,” said alum Chelsea Sharpe MM ’17.

Student Sam Ostroff performs on the harpsichord with the early music ensemble Baroque Sinfonia in the Newman Recital Hall on campus.

“**My private teachers and all of the faculty are some of the kindest people I’ve ever known. Our Thornton community is very special.”**

- Nina Shishar MM ’20, composer, pianist, flutist
The Trojan Family is Forever

USC Thornton roots run deep at major entertainment and cultural institutions, from the GRAMMY Museum and Hollywood studios to major orchestras around the globe. Strong alumni networks are active worldwide, and help open professional doors for USC Thornton graduates.

Double Majoring at Other USC Schools

A student gives step-by-step advice on having two different majors.

Erica Lee BM ’21 completed degrees in Piano Performance and Business Administration. She offers details, including a look at her Google Calendar to show how she balances classes, practice and dance rehearsals with a competitive hip hop team.

USC’s Arts District

Unusual for a research university, USC has six world-class arts schools. Most are in a prime location along 34th Street, making for a hub of artistic endeavors. USC Thornton is based there, along with Cinematic Arts and Dance. Dramatic Arts, Fine Arts and Architecture are only a short walk away.

Artistic Collaborations

Artistic collaborations happen everywhere at USC, both inside and outside of the classrooms. Each year, a collaboration between sophomore choreographers at the USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance and composers at USC Thornton results in an annual showcase, Choreographers & Composers, where students perform original works in the performance spaces at the Glorya Kaufman International Dance Center.

An extraordinary campus—full of opportunities—in the heart of Los Angeles
Application Process

1. Determine the specific application requirements for your chosen program (details at music.usc.edu/admission).
2. Complete the appropriate USC Application for Admission (available at admit.usc.edu).
3. Complete the supplemental music portions of the USC application, and upload the appropriate media submission(s) (including prescreen material, as required) through the SlideRoom portal (instructions at music.usc.edu/admission).
4. Perform an audition, if required, according to the specific audition requirements of your chosen program (details at music.usc.edu/admission).

For more information, contact: 213-740-8986 uscmusic@usc.edu

ADMISSION TIMELINE

December 1
- Application deadline for all programs

January – March
- Live auditions (by invitation only) in January and early February
- Application and/or portfolio review

April 1
- Admission and financial aid notification

April 15
- Graduate enrollment commitment deadline

May 1
- Undergraduate enrollment commitment deadline
* Notification and commitment dates can vary for undergraduate transfers

Financial Aid

Undergraduates: U.S. citizens (and some eligible non-citizens) can qualify for need-based financial aid (see financialaid.usc.edu) and are strongly encouraged to apply. USC meets the full USC-determined financial need for eligible students through available funding from federal, state and university sources. Eligible first-year undergraduates from families with an annual income of $80,000 or less with typical assets will attend USC tuition-free. More information at affordability.usc.edu.

Academic scholarships are also available for undergraduate students. More information at usc.edu/scholarships.

Graduate Students: Applicants to scholarship-eligible programs are automatically considered for Thornton scholarships based upon their application, audition, and/or portfolio. Teaching assistantships are also available for some graduate programs. More information at music.usc.edu/finaid.

U.S. citizens (and some eligible non-citizens) can qualify for student loans up to the total cost of attendance, as well as work-study funding. More information at financialaid.usc.edu.

Degrees & Majors

Undergraduate Majors include the Bachelor of Music (BM), Bachelor of Science (BS), and Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degrees.

Undergraduate Minors include Jazz Studies, Music Industry, Music Production, Music Recording, Musical Studies, Musical Theatre, Popular Music Studies, and Songwriting.

Graduate Programs include the Master of Arts (MA), Master of Music (MM), Master of Science (MS), Graduate Certificate (GCRT), Artist Diploma (ARTD), Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Classical Performance & Composition

Brass (BM, MM, GCRT, ARTD, DMA)
Choral Music (BM, MM, DMA)
Classical Guitar (BM, MM, GCRT, ARTD, DMA)
Composition (BM, MM, DMA)
Keyboard Collaborative Arts (MM, GCRT, ARTD, DMA)
Organ (BM, MM, GCRT, DMA)
Percussion (BM, MM, GCRT, ARTD, DMA)
Piano (BM, MM, GCRT, ARTD, DMA)
Sacred Music (MM, DMA)
Strings (BM, MM, GCRT, ARTD, DMA)
Vocal Arts (BM, MM, GCRT, DMA)
Woodwinds (BM, MM, GCRT, ARTD, DMA)

Contemporary Music

Jazz Studies, Instrumental (BM, MM, GCRT, DMA)
Jazz Studies, Vocal (BM)
Music Industry (BS, MS)
Music Production (BM)
Musical Theatre (BFA)*
Popular Music Performance (BM)
Screen Scoring (MM)
Studio Guitar (MM, GCRT, DMA)

* The BFA Musical Theatre is offered jointly with the USC School of Dramatic Arts and the USC Kaufman School of Dance. Contact the USC School of Dramatic Arts for more information.

Research & Scholarly Studies

Arts Leadership (GCRT, MS)
Community Music (MM)
Early Music Performance (MA, GCRT, DMA)
Music Teaching & Learning (MM, DMA)
Musiology (PhD)
USC Thornton Faculty

**Classical Performance & Composition**

**Choral & Sacred Music**
Suzi Ogby
Cristian Grases, chair
Mary Mattie
Jo-Michael Scheibe
Tram Sparks
Nick Stimple

**Classical Guitar**
Brian Head
William Kanengiser
Pepe Romero
Scott Tennant, chair

**Composition**
Donald Crockett, chair
Camara Dennis
Ted Heume
Frank Ticheli
Nina Young

**Theory & Analysis**
Bill Biersach
Neal Desby
Daniel Caputo
Brian Head
Veronika Krausas
Eric Pham
Christopher Rizé
Mark Weiser

**Music for Dance**
Paul Hodgins

**Violin**
Karen Dreyfus
Yura Lee

**Cello**
Ralph Kirshbaum
Andrew Shulman

**Double Bass**
David Allen Moore

**Harp**
JoAnn Turkovsky

**Orchestral Repertoire**
Ben Hong

**Vocal Arts & Opera**
Thomas Michael Allen
Ken Cazan, resident stage director
Jeremy Frank
Parmer Fuller, musical theatre
Rod Gilfry
Lynn Helfing
Elizabeth Hynes
Brent McMullen, music director
Lisa Sylvester, chair

**Winds & Percussion**
Sharon Lavery, chair

**Flute**
Catherine Kardol
James Walker

**Oboe**
Marion Kuszyk
Joel Tirm
Allan Vogel

**Clarinet**
Yehuda Gilad
David Howard

**Bassoon**
Judith Farmer
Shawn Mouser

**French Horn**
Jessica Maxfeld

**Trumpet**
Steven Becknell
Julie Landisman

**Trombone**
Thomas Hooten
Jennifer Marotta

**Tuba**
James Self
Doug Tonsquist

**Percussion**
James Babor

**Contemporary Music**

**Jazz Studies**
Bass
Alphonso Johnson
Edwin Livingston
Derek "Dex" Oleskiewicz

**Jazz Composition**
Jason Goldman
Vince Mendoza
Bob Mintzer

**Musical Theatre**
Lyndia Johnson
Karen Parks, head of music

**Popular Music**
Abby Albid
Jeffrey Allen
Michael Arron
Adriana Balic
Sean Holt, vice dean
Paul Jackson, Jr.
Alphonso Johnson
Lyndia Johnson
Will Kennedy
Timothy Kosta
Ginny Luke
Patrice Rushen, chair

**Musical Industry**
András Alexander
Jonathan Azu
Robert Borg
Jeff Brabec
Todd Brabec
Michael Garcia, chair
Mark Goldstein
Jeremy Gruber
Joel High
Michael Kaminsky

**Tuba**
James Self
Doug Tonsquist

**Percussion**
James Babor

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Robert Borg
Jeff Brabec
Todd Brabec
Michael Garcia, chair
Mark Goldstein
Jeremy Gruber
Joel High
Michael Kaminsky

**Studio Guitar**
Adam del Monte
Bruce Forman
Timothy Kobza
Frank Potenza
Richard Smith
Nick Stoubis, chair
Steve Trovato

**Research & Scholarly Studies**

**Arts Leadership**
Helane Anderson
Snehal Desai
Kenneth Foster, director
Jazmin Morales

**Early Music**
Lucinda Carver
Lot Demeeyer
Adam Knight Gilbert, director
Rotem Gilbert
Jennifer Kampani
Charles Koster
Jason Yoshida

**Music Teaching & Learning**
William Coppola
Robert Cutietta, dean
Susan Helfter
Beatriz Ilari, chair
Peter Webster
Vincent Womack

**Musicology**
Bruce Alan Brown, chair
Joanna Demers, vice dean
Adam Knight Gilbert
Rotem Gilbert
Tim Greving
Leah Morrison
Sean Nye
Nate Sloan
Scott Spencer
Lisa Cooper Vest

**Screen Scoring**
Peter Anthony
Jon Burlingame
Daniel Carlin, chair
Siobhan Dougall
Tim Greving
Laura Karpman
Patrick Kirk
Richard McEvoy
Loïla Rétamans
Eric Schmidt
Garry Schyman
Lawrence Shragge
Christopher Young

**USC Thornton School of Music**