Music in the City of Angels

Viewbook 2022-23
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.
dinary school.

Online Extras
Full stories and videos for the features in this viewbook are at music.usc.edu/viewbook

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“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
(L-R) Klara Krklec, Gabriel Maffuz-Anker, Tiffany Chung and Johnny May in the downtown Los Angeles Fashion District.
Bassoonist Jaquain Sloan in the downtown Los Angeles Fashion District. Sloan is now an orchestra fellow at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.
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 Tonality, 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.

“If 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
(L-R) Michael Siess, Misha Vayman, Juan-Salvador Carrasco and Nao Kubota at The Art of Living Foundation in the University Park neighborhood.
USC Thornton alums 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.

**Celebrating a Tenth Anniversary Virtually**

*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 virtual performances as an opportunity to add visual elements to the music.
After sending a classical guitar from Spain to a talented Nigerian musician, classical guitar doctoral candidate 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.

Women Composers Shine
DMA student 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; Anya Lagman’s BM ’22 “Unravel” had its world première 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.

Piano, Voice or Composition?
Pianist and baritone Joshua Tan DMA ’20 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.

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.
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
Hannah McCarthy performs at the El Rey Theatre as part of the annual Popular Music Senior Showcase.
“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
Emmy-nominated film composer and alum in studio guitar and screen scoring

A Daring Student One Year, A GRAMMY Nom the Next
Joey Messina-Doerning, a groundbreaking student, has a red-hot career.

As a Music Production student, Joey Messina-Doerning BM ’19 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*.

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 provides 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 (below right). Helping her continue her dazzling rise, Lubliner remains on a fast track.
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’s WDR Big Band performed at JazzFest Bonn with Knower, an avant-garde group led by Louis Cole ’09. Mintzer then had Cole return to campus to play with the USC Thornton Jazz Orchestra.

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

Pop Students Host Game Night
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. When they couldn’t get together in person, two upper-classmen organized a game night, inviting all the Pop students to meet the new freshmen, 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 ’08, MM ’10, DMA ’18) (below). A few students even had jobs at Fender waiting for them upon graduation.

Samantha Shapiro and Josh Ginsburg perform with the USC Thornton Jazz Orchestra at the Carson Center on campus.
“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)
Lila Forde and Yafeu Tyhimba at Grand Central Market in downtown Los Angeles.
Director of Orchestras
Jim Wang leads a rehearsal at Lincoln Middle School in Santa Monica.
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 undergraduate Robert Wang expanded his studies into the Thornton Early Music and Musicology programs, 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 2020-2021 school year of remote learning to master pro-level applications, while practicing the Renaissance lute, Baroque lute, Baroque guitar and theorbo.

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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.

Musicians Need Technology
Music students of all majors and genres learn digital recording techniques.
“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.

“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 Shekhar MM ’20, composer, pianist, flutist
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. Using technology creatively 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.

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.

Sam Ostroff performs on the harpsichord with the early music ensemble Baroque Sinfonia in the Newman Recital Hall on campus.
An extraordinary campus—full of opportunities—in the heart of Los Angeles

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 balanced 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, Dance and, beginning in Dec. 2023, 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.
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
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) and Bachelor of Science (BS).

Undergraduate Minors include Jazz Studies, Music Industry, Music Production, Music Recording, Musical Studies, 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 & Vocal (BM, MM, GCRT, DMA)
- Music Industry (BS, MS)
- Music Production (BM)
- Popular Music Performance (BM)
- Screen Scoring (MM)
- Studio Guitar (MM, GCRT, DMA)

Research & Scholarly Studies
- Arts Leadership (GCRT, MS)
- Community Music (MM)
- Early Music Performance (MA, GCRT, DMA)
- Music Teaching & Learning (MM, DMA)
- Musicology (PHD)
USC Thornton Faculty

Classical Performance & Composition

Choral & Sacred Music
Suzi Digby
Cristian Grases, chair
Mary Mattei
Jo-Michael Scheibe
Tram Sparks
Nick Strimple

Classical Guitar
Brian Head
William Kanengiser
Pepe Romero
Scott Tenant, chair

Composition

Composition
Camae Ayewa (Dennis)
Donald Crockett, chair
Brian Head
Ted Hearne
Veronika Krausas
Frank Ticheli
Nina Young

Theory & Analysis
Daniel Allas
Nicolas Lell Benavides
Daniel Caputo
Juan Pablo Contreras
Neal Desby
Brian Head
Veronika Krausas
Eric Pham
Christopher Rozé
Mark Weiser

Conducting
Cristian Grases
Sharon Lavery, resident conductor
Larry J. Livingston, chair
Troy Quinn
Jo-Michael Scheibe
Tram Sparks
Carl St.Clair, principal conductor

Keyboard Collaborative Arts
Kevin Fitz-Gerald
Alan L. Smith, director

Keyboard Studies
Bernadene Blaha
Kevin Fitz-Gerald
Stewart Gordon
Jeffrey Kahane
Sung-Hwa Park
Antoinette Perry
Stephen Pierce
Daniel Pollack
Alan L. Smith, chair

Organ
Cherry Rhodes
Ladd Thomas, chair

Strings

Violin
Lina Bahn, chair
Margaret Batjer
Martin Chalifour
Glenn Dicterow
Bing Wang

Viola
Karen Dreyfus
Yura Lee

Cello
Ralph Kirshbaum
Andrew Shulman
Seth Parker Woods

Double Bass
David Allen Moore

Harp
JoAnn Turovsky

Orchestral Repertoire
Ben Hong

Vocal Arts & Opera
Thomas Michael Allen
Ken Cazan, resident stage director
Jeremy Frank
Rod Gilfry
Lynn Heng
Elizabeth Hynes
Brent McMunn, music director
Karen Parks
Lisa Sylvester, chair

Winds & Percussion
Sharon Lavery, chair

Flute
Catherine Karoly

Oboe
Marion Kuszyk
Joel Timm
Allan Vogel

Clarinet
Yehuda Gilad
David Howard

Bassoon
Judith Farmer
Shawn Mouser

Saxophone
Jessica Maxfield

Horn
Steven Becknell
Julie Landsman

Trumpet
Thomas Hooten
Jennifer Marotta

Trombone
Terry S. Cravens

Tuba
James Self
Doug Tornquist

Percussion
James Babor
Joseph Pereira

Trojan Marching Band
Jacob Vogel

Contemporary Music

Jazz Studies
Bass
Alphonso Johnson
Edwin Livingston
Derek “Oles” Oleszkiewicz

Jazz Composition
Jason Goldman
Vince Mendoza
Bob Mintzer

Percussion
Peter Erskine
Roy McCurdy
Aaron Serfaty

Piano
David Arna
Alan Pasqua

Saxophone
Jason Goldman, chair
Bob Mintzer
Bob Sheppard

Trumpet
Jon Hatamiya
Andy Martin

Vocal Jazz
Sara Gazarek
Kathleen Grace
Katie Thioux

Music Industry
Andrae Alexander
Jonathan Azu
Robert Borg
Jeff Brabec
Todd Brabec
Michael Garcia, chair
Mark Goldstein
Studio Guitar
Adam del Monte
Bruce Forman
Timothy Kobza
Molly Miller
Frank Potenza
Richard Smith
Nick Stoubis, chair
Steve Trovato

Music Teaching & Learning
William Coppola
Susan Helfter
Beatriz Ilani, chair
Candice D. Mattio

Research & Scholarly Studies
Arts Leadership
Helane Anderson
Kenneth Foster, director
Jazmín Morales

Early Music
Lot Demeyer
Maxine Eilander
Adam Knight Gilbert, director
Rotem Gilbert
Jennifer Kampani
Jason Yoshida

Musicology
León F. García Corona
Joanna Demers, vice dean
Jonathan A. Gómez
Adam Knight Gilbert, chair
Rotem Gilbert
Leah Morrison
Sean Nye
Nate Sloan
Scott Spencer
Lisa Cooper Vest

*Faculty, as of June 1, 2022

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Assistant professor Will Kennedy
French horn player Anna Gilpatrick in downtown Los Angeles.