

Montclair State University
College of the Arts
John J. Cali School of Music

**Master of Music in Performance
Choral Conducting Concentration**

POINTS TO NOTE:

- The MM in Performance (choral conducting concentration) is a two-year (four semester) full-time/on-campus program commencing Fall semester only.

- Graduate applicants apply through the MSU graduate office of admissions.
 - *Please note*, the Cali School oversees the audition process, whereas the admissions office oversees the application process.
 - Any questions regarding the **university application and required documents** (transcripts, essay, resume, etc.) should be addressed to the graduate admissions office (www.montclair.edu/graduate).
 - Questions regarding the **audition process** should be directed to Dr. Heather J. Buchanan, director of choral activities (buchananh@montclair.edu).

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS (that accompany your application):

1. **Transcript:** one (1) from each college attended.
2. **Statement of Purpose:** please write an integrated essay providing a response to each of the following questions.
 - What are the goals for graduate study and your future career?
 - In what ways do your academic background and your professional experiences provide evidence of your potential for success in the MM Performance (conducting) program and in your eventual career? Please give specific examples of relevant coursework and/or experience.
 - Is there any further information we should consider in assessing your candidacy?
3. **Letters of Recommendation:** two (2). People who can attest to your choral conducting ability, communication skills, and personal qualities.

AUDITIONS FOR MUSIC APPLICANTS:

Applicants to the Master of Music (MM) program in Performance are required to audition as part of the application review process. You must first **submit a graduate admission application** to The Graduate School. During the review of your application, you will be invited to submit an audition registration form. Please choose either the live or video audition option for the last available audition date. You will not be required to attend this audition date, but will instead schedule your audition directly with Dr. Heather Buchanan. The audition registration form does not hold you to any responsibilities on the day, but instead is required in order for your application to process properly. For more information about the application and audition process, please visit the **John J. Cali School of Music website**.

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS:

1. PRE-SCREENING VIDEO:

MM Choral Conducting candidates are required to complete the pre-screening video *prior* to the scheduling of an on-campus audition. An invitation to an on-campus audition will be offered after reviewing the video and at the discretion of the director of choral activities (DCA).

Video content requirements: camera focused on front/side view of conductor. Ensure clarity of audio and video. Include PDFs of scores/music featured in rehearsal and performance.

- i. **Brief introduction:** please state your name, identify the choir/s featured in your video, and any other pertinent information (e.g., age of choristers, familiarity with the music, special circumstances, etc.).
- ii. **Rehearsal:** 20 minutes (max) showing your pedagogical process and communication skills. Before the rehearsal begins, clearly state your objectives.
- iii. **Performance:** two (2) stylistically contrasting pieces (or movements of a larger work). May be from a live concert performance and/or specially recorded "audition performance." Repertoire may be *a cappella* and/or accompanied. One piece (or substantial part thereof) should showcase legato conducting and the ability to shape musical lines.

Video format/submission:

Mp4 or .MOV file via private YouTube link. *Share link via email* - please do *not* attach large files to email. Invite the following MSU choral faculty to view:

- Dr. Heather J. Buchanan: buchananh@montclair.edu + Greg Stout: stoutg@montclair.edu

DEADLINE for candidates auditioning for entry in Fall of 2026-27 academic year: videos, *Statement of Purpose* and Letters of Recommendation must be submitted no later than **Monday, Dec 1, 2025**. Please allow a minimum of three (3) weeks for your materials to be reviewed.

2. ON-CAMPUS AUDITION:

Should you be invited to campus for an in-person audition, it will be scheduled on either a Tuesday or Thursday during the Spring semester, typically in February. The specific day/date will be coordinated by the director of choral activities. Interaction with current students and faculty, and choral ensembles is an essential part of the process.

Audition activities will comprise the following:

- i. Interview with DCA and collaborative pianist (30 mins):
 - a. Discussing your philosophy of choral leadership, the audition music, your score preparation, and other relevant artistic/technical content
 - b. Performing prepared technical (coordinated action) exercises (sent 3 weeks in advance)
 - c. Sight-singing
- ii. Conducting a brief section (max 10 minutes) of a Montclair choral rehearsal (specific choir and repertoire TBA).
- iii. Participation in Chorale and University Singers rehearsals, singing your divisi voice part.
- iv. Informal meetings with GA/TA, and UG students (including student leaders and choristers).