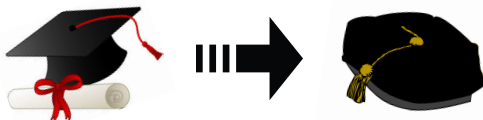


# Back to School

*Selecting and Planning for the Right Graduate Studies Program for YOU*



Kaitlin Bove  
DMA Wind Conducting Candidate  
University of Kentucky  
BM/MM Music Education ('08/'12)  
University of the Pacific  
kaitlin.may.bove@gmail.com

## Set Your Intention

WHY do you want an advanced degree?

Job Opportunities/Teach in Higher Education

To Learn More/Become a Better Professional/Become an Expert in Your Field

To Develop a New Career Specialty

To Magnify Your Philosophy/Agenda in Your Field

To Make More Money

Don't feel like you *have* to go back to school

## What Degrees Are Out There?

MM, MA, MS / DMA, PhD, EdD

Arts Administration, Composition, **Conducting, Education**, Ethnomusicology, Performance, Musicology, Technology, Therapy, Theory

Know what each specialty is designed to do and what your coursework will look like

How far do you want to go?

What job paths do each degree open for you?

## How Long Will This Actually Take?

Masters Degrees: ~2 years

Summer Masters: ~3 Summers + school year projects (balance of options in programs)

Doctoral Degrees: ~3 years

PhD Degrees: 3+ years

Going out in the field A.B.D. (All But Dissertation)

## Narrowing the Program Search

Full-time vs. Part-time vs. Summer vs. Online

Big School vs. Small School

School Location – Local vs. National vs. Abroad

Program Resources

Program Emphasis

Undergraduate demographics, philosophy, what are its grads doing?

Research, ensemble availability, athletics, activity “hosting”

Capstone project/recital/dissertation expectations

## Assistantships

Teaching Assistantship vs. Fellowship vs. No Financial Aid

TA Responsibilities: ensemble, classes, office work, supervision, summer expectations

Financial Compensation: tuition waiver, stipend, fees, healthcare – how many months?

## Legwork

Meet your potential advisors and professors

Attend clinics/conferences/symposia and NETWORK

Establish a “brand” – what makes you unique, qualified, desirable? Find your “niche”

Film yourself often in preparation for video submissions/interviews/live auditions

Always be professional

Consider how you are dressed/ behave in professional/public settings

Be cautious with social media use

Be aware of how small the profession is

Marketability

Start publishing (professional magazines, journals, online blog, podcast, etc.)

Start presenting/clinic-ing/guest conducting (for other ensembles, at conferences, clinics)

Attend music conferences and conducting symposia as often as possible

Score study (conducting programs will expect that you have a large list of known repertoire)

Build a personal website and portfolio

### **How to Know If A School Will Be A Good Fit**

Check out the program's website(s), YouTube videos, stats

Talk to graduates of the program and reach out to *current* students

Attend events hosted/instructed by its faculty (symposia, conferences, workshops)

Send your information to your potential advisor to get their opinion, ask people who know you well

### **Deciding When To Apply** (December 1<sup>st</sup> Deadlines)

Based on your personal career intentions (where do you want to be in "x" number of years?)

Getting into a certain program *may* be a 3+ year process

Odds are you won't "fall into" the program of your choice

### **How to Apply**

Make a spreadsheet of the schools you're interested in and their stats

Reach out to get an idea if there is space for you before applying (what is the projection?)

Gather strong references (individualized letters of recommendation and phone calls)

Have 5-6 references prepared in case some fall through

Don't pad your CV/Resume

Know your educational philosophy

Prepare Video: conducting 3 contrasting pieces, 15 minutes of continuous teaching

Budget for Fees (~\$50 per app)

Prepare to travel on your own dollar

### **Interviewing**

Know yourself and how to express who you are

You will likely be asked to teach or conduct – get plenty of warning and plenty of rest beforehand

Don't be afraid to ask questions – the program has to be a good fit for you, too!

Try to ask the current graduate students the strengths and weaknesses of the program

If they can't articulate this, it may be a problem

### **Top 5 Things Professors Look For In Music Graduate Students:**

5. Teaching experience (2-5 years depending on the degree)

4. Knowledge of the field/trends/repertoire

3. A willingness to learn and to work

2. A good musician

1. A great person

\*This shouldn't be a one-year process. Take your time and make the choice that's right for you. If you aren't happy with your first results, reassess and move forward. You can always defer and apply again at another time.

Be brave and be confident. You will end up in the place you are meant to be.\*

*"Much talent is lost in this world for want of a little courage."*