

Royal  
Conservatoire  
The Hague



Professional  
preparation at  
the Royal  
Conservatoire

# Professional preparation at the Royal Conservatoire

At the Royal Conservatoire we endeavour to prepare musicians and dancers as well as possible for their future professional career. In light of changes in professional practice and various recent developments (e.g. the corona crisis), preparation for professional practice, active collaboration with the profession and the development of entrepreneurial skills are more important than ever.

Students at our institution are prepared in various ways for the constantly changing national and international professional practice. One of the basic principles of our education is to train musicians and dancers to the highest possible artistic standard and so enable them to compete on the international labour market. Our students are guided in their artistic development by teachers who are themselves professional artists. We also understand how important it is for students to come into contact with professional situations during their studies through collaborations with professional partners. We attach great value to the development of entrepreneurship and professional skills, and continuously evaluate whether those elements are properly integrated into the curriculum. We also invite the students themselves to actively think about their future careers and to demonstrate their ability to function as 'reflective practitioners' in the profession.

In order to ensure that we match the demands of international professional practice, the results of our education are assessed against international standards by international examiners and through international visitations. We ensure that our teaching achieves the envisaged goals by inviting representatives of the profession to critically review our programmes and by gearing

the education to internationally recognised learning outcomes that have been drawn up in consultation with the profession and the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC). Findings from student evaluations and the regular discussions with our alumni are also incorporated in the development of the curricula. Attention is also devoted to societal issues, as demonstrated, for example, by the development of new electives devoted to diversity and social engagement: *Proactive Diversity* and *Jazz (R)Evolution*.

## Bachelor of Music (performance departments)

In the performance departments, since 2020 the development of professional skills has been embodied in Career Skills courses, which cover both 'soft' and 'hard' skills. These courses are incorporated in the curriculum in such a way as to provide an integrated and continuous learning trajectory from year one up to and including year four (B1-4). The Career Skills courses are *Start-Up!*, *Learning Lab for Singers*, *Entrepreneurial Bootcamp*, *Meet the Professionals*, *The Business of Music*, *Audition Training*, *Making your own Performance* and *Preparation for Professional Practice*. Recurring topics are communication, self-management, artistic identity, and becoming aware of career possibilities.

**The Entrepreneurial Bootcamp gave me a perspective on my musical career.**

– B2 student

In addition, the Bachelor of Music curriculum includes a large number of practical courses in which students learn the skills they need to succeed in a mixed professional practice. This component of the curriculum embraces a wide range of courses, including *Educational Skills*, *Critical Music Studies*, *Chamber Music*, *Stage Skills* and *Training Orchestral Parts*. These courses are supplemented by projects in cooperation with professional partners such as *Side by Side*, an annual project in which students rehearse and perform a concert programme alongside the professionals of the Orchestra of the 18th Century.

[See the overview of Career Skills and professional preparation courses in the Bachelor of Music](#)

## Bachelor of Dance

**The Young Talent Project is an entrée to the real dance world.**

– B4 student

There is close collaboration between the Bachelor of Dance programme and the leading Dutch companies such as the Nationale Ballet, Introdans, Scapino Ballet Rotterdam, and in particular the Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT). Every year, the programme organises the Young Talent Project in association with the NDT. The Bachelor of Dance curriculum also includes courses devoted to professional preparation, including *Study & Career Planning* (a course in which students develop their capacity for self-study and self-reflection, learn how to write a CV, make a video for an audition and learn the intricacies of contracts), *Creating a Solo* (to enhance their ability to use and develop their artistic and creative competencies, reflective powers and research skills) and *Health & Well-being* (a course which covers various elements intended to prepare the student physically and mentally for a professional career). Students in the final year do a practical internship, for example with a professional company or the Royal Conservatoire Dance Ensemble or through participation in an external professional dance project.

## Bachelor of Music in Education

The clear thread running through the Music in Education programme is the intensive practical internship, through which the students gain realistic and hands-on practical experience. Through orientation visits and internships, students come into contact with the various target groups, from primary and secondary schools to the work terrain outside the field of education. In the fourth year, students choose a domain for their internship. They are strongly encouraged to work together and to show initiative. For example, the students organise the annual cultural trip themselves. Through the *Entrepreneurship* course and the various projects, they are introduced to the commercial, creative and organisational aspects of cultural and independent entrepreneurship.

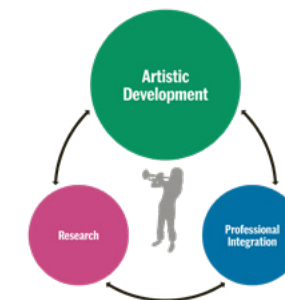
## Master of Music

Our Master curriculum builds on the Bachelor curriculum: while we *prepare* Bachelor students for professional practice, our aim is to enable Master students to *integrate into* the professional practice. In this way, the Master students already gain a foothold in the profession during their studies. This integration is achieved in two ways:

1. Professional integration in the form of a Master Project, which is designed to promote self-reflection and entrepreneurship in relation to the students' artistic development.
2. Professional integration by means of integrated Master programmes in association with professional partners.

### 1. Professional integration in the form of a Master Project

The Master of Music curriculum encompasses three domains: Artistic Development, Research and Professional Integration. In addition to advancing their personal artistic development (in the instrumental/vocal/composition lessons) and conducting research under the guidance of a research supervisor, students also work with a professional integration coach in pursuing professional activities. The vehicle for this is a Master Project, in which students are given the opportunity to create their own project that combines artistic development, research and professional integration activities. This is our way of giving students the opportunity to experiment in the process of developing a personal professional practice during their studies. Accordingly, the students can immediately apply the skills and ideas they have acquired, and carry out any projects or collaborations they have put together as soon as they graduate.



[See the overview of the courses on preparation for professional practice in the Master of Music](#)

## 2. Professional integration through integrated Master programmes in association with professional partners

We offer a number of unique Master programmes that have been designed in consultation with professional partners. In these programmes, teaching and practice are intertwined to give students a realistic impression of the profession and thus give them the best possible preparation for the reality of the professional practice. This process usually leads to the creation of new ensembles and enables our students to provide an impulse for professional partners.

An overview of the exclusive Master programmes with our professional partners:

Master programme	Professional partner(s)
Master Specialisation Classical Music: Orchestra Master	Residentie Orkest
Master Specialisation Classical Music: Ensemble Academy	Various professional Dutch ensembles and concert venues (Asko Schönberg, New European Ensemble, Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ in Amsterdam, Korzo Theater in The Hague)
Master Specialisation Classical Music: Ensemble Percussion	Slagwerk Den Haag
National Master Orchestral Conducting (NMO)	Various Dutch symphony orchestras and the Conservatorium van Amsterdam
Master Ensemble Singing	Netherlands Chamber Choir, including NKK NXT
ECMAster	European Chamber Music Academy (ECMA), Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris; Fondazione Scuola di Musica di Fiesole Onlus (Fiesole, Italy); Lietuvos Muzikos ir Teatro Akademija, Vilnius; Norges musikkhøgskole, Oslo; Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester; Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst, Vienna; Festival Pablo Casals de Prades, Ghent Festival, Grafenegg Festival

Master Early Music	Regular joint projects with the Orchestra of the 18th Century and Holland Baroque
New Audiences and Innovative Practice (NAIP)	Companies, institutions, social partners and venues
Dutch National Opera Academy (DNOA)	The Netherlands Opera and Conservatorium van Amsterdam
The Musician Educator	Various partners in the field of education, LUCA School of Arts, Leuven (Belgium) and the University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz (Austria)
Music Education according to the Kodály concept	Various partners in the field of education, Cathedral Choir School in Utrecht, Liszt Academy in Budapest and the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét (Hungary)
Audio Communication & Sonology	Audio Communication & Sonology is a double degree programme in association with the Technische Universität Berlin.

## Professional preparation in the creative departments (Composition)

The Composition department focuses on developing the students' creativity and versatility, encouraging them to carry out research and helping them to discover their own identity as composers. Through project-oriented education, students develop their own contemporary music practice while collaborating with instrumentalists and singers in performances of their work. This is done mainly in association with musical theatre workshops, art academies and various music ensembles and venues such as the New European Ensemble, Ensemble Klang, Kluster5, Slagwerk Den Haag, Gaudeamus and Korzo. The One Minute Symphony in association with the Residentie Orkest is just one of the many examples of projects for the Composition students. During these projects, the students are also confronted with aspects such as production, publicity and rehearsals with musicians and are working in a professional environment.

The commercial aspects of professional practice are highlighted in the annual Donemus Academy. In association with the publisher Donemus and various experts from the profession, the participants explore subjects such as dealing with publishers,

clients, lyricists and ensembles, as well as legal issues such as copyright issues. In *Educational Skills for Creative Artists*, bachelor students are introduced to new learning environments before going on to develop their own workshops and educational projects and manage creative activities. The course *Proactive Diversity* focuses on learning to engage in discussion of diversity, acquiring communication skills and finding creative solutions as a composer. Students actively help to organise the Spring Festival, an annual event devoted to the latest works by the Composition students, by arranging musicians and taking care of the production, programming and marketing, making this annual event a perfect preparation for professional practice.

### Professional preparation in the creative departments (Sonology)

The Royal Conservatoire's Institute of Sonology has an extensive network of professional partners, including the Groupe de Recherches Musicales (GRM) in Paris, the Dutch Music Institute (NMI), Studio LOOS in The Hague, the Technische Universität Berlin, the Herz-Labor van het Zentrum für Kunst und Medien (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, the Willem Twee Studios in Den Bosch, the V2\_Lab for the Unstable Media in Rotterdam and The Game of Life in The Hague (see also [sonology.org/links-connected-institutions](http://sonology.org/links-connected-institutions)). Students regularly attend and participate in workshops, give concerts and present papers at festivals hosted by these partners.

The Bachelor of Music in Sonology offers a unique combination of courses covering both the technical and artistic aspects of electroacoustic music and its varied applications. In addition, students discover new learning environments in the reshaped *Educational Skills for Creative Artists* course, and then go on to develop their own unique workshops and educational projects and manage creative. In the third year, students do an intensive internship and gain experience and establish important contacts in the professional community. Internships are offered by for example ARTEK, New Emergences, Soundtrackcity, Studio LOOS, V2\_, WORM and Willem Twee.

In the Master of Sonology, students carry out a personal research project with a theoretical and a practical component. The project is documented in a thesis and the artistic results are presented at a public festival organised by the students themselves. Academic skills are very useful skills for future professionals, who will regularly participate in conferences such

as the International Computer Music Conference (ICMC), the New Instruments for Musical Expression (NIME) conference and the Sound and Music Computing (SMC) conference. Commercial aspects of a professional career are discussed in the *Project Management and Presentation* course, with topics such as drafting business proposals, schedules, budgets, funding requests, planning projects, and the importance of creating your own visible profile on the internet.

Sonology alumni work as composers, performance artists, sound designers, computer programmers, sound engineers and teachers, or combinations of these disciplines (see [sonology.org/bachelors-alumni](http://sonology.org/bachelors-alumni) and [sonology.org/masters-alumni](http://sonology.org/masters-alumni)). A relatively large number of students choose to go on to study for a PhD after completing the Master programme.

**Even though Sonology is experimental by nature, it also taught me the technical and artistic tools to survive in a commercial world.**

– Sonology Alumnus

### Alumni Community

After graduation, students can sign up to the Alumni Community, a network that keeps the Conservatoire's alumni in touch with one another as well as organising events. The Alumni Community has an online international directory and an interactive job board. Our alumni are also actively involved in the education, for example teaching in the Career Skills courses *Start-Up!*, *Meet the Professionals* and *Preparation for Professional Practice* in the Bachelor of Music programme. In the Master of Music programme, the professional integration coaches who supervise students in professional activities are usually alumni.

### Amare

The Royal Conservatoire, the Residentie Orkest, and Nederlands Dans Theater have now moved to the new Amare complex in the city centre of The Hague. This means that the Royal Conservatoire's vision of the importance of actively collaborating with the professional community and stimulating entrepreneurship in students – in addition to providing top-class

artistic education – will be even further developed. Over the coming years, the exploration of opportunities provided by being in the same building with these important professional organisations will be an important priority. Sharing a building will create new and unique opportunities for artistic growth, pedagogical development and intensive collaboration, for example through joint productions and programmes, interdisciplinary courses, educational outreach projects and internships. Additionally, from this new location, we will be looking to expand our social and cultural network. This will create further opportunities for students to become actively involved in society and thus enhance their entrepreneurial skills.

An overview of courses relating to preparation for professional practice in the Bachelor of Music.

## Bachelor of Music

### Career Skills courses:

Course	Content	Departments
Start-Up!	Introduction week with opportunities to network and meet alumni.	All departments
Learning Lab for Singers	Lessons with a focus on peer learning and peer feedback. The course also covers the development of a professional attitude and a range of strategies.	Vocal Studies
Entrepreneurial Bootcamp	An intensive week of studies outside the Conservatoire, during which second-year students are asked to develop a project for a new audience and often at an unexpected location in the heart of the community. This course is derived from the European project Reflective Entrepreneurial Music Education Worldclass (RENEW).	All performing departments
Meet the Professionals	Students discuss subjects such as reputation management, networking and business development with alumni.	Classical Music, Early Music, and Jazz
The Business of Music	Lessons covering subjects such as entrepreneurship, organisational matters and practical issues such as contracts, tax and how to start your own company.	Vocal Studies
Making your own Performance	Students work together to create a small staged performance, based on their own concept. This includes writing a script, developing ideas about set and costumes and choosing their own repertoire.	Vocal Studies
Preparation for Professional Practice	A course for fourth-year students in which entrepreneurial and organisational aspects of a musician's career are discussed and explained by guests from the profession. The Vocal Studies department also devotes specific attention to Audition Training.	All performing departments, Art of Sound

## Other professional preparation courses:

Course	Content	Departments
Tutoring	Students in the Bachelor programme are assigned a tutor who helps them to reflect on their studies. In order to become independent reflective practitioners, and capable of operating independently in a constantly changing professional practice, students need self-regulation skills and habits. The tutor can offer several tools to develop these skills, based on students' individual needs and preferences.	All departments
Career Development Office	The Career Development Office (CDO) occupies a key position in the Conservatoire by assisting students to find possibilities for concerts and other projects outside the institute. Bachelor and Master students can earn credits for professional activities organised outside the Conservatoire via the CDO. This unique approach encourages the students to take personal responsibility for finding and creating their own professional opportunities. Students are also expected to reflect on these activities.	All departments
Educational Skills	Every student who sings or plays an instrument follows courses devoted to the practice of teaching. In the third year, the students do an internship in which they teach an individual pupil. Students who wish to further master the skills of a music teacher can follow the Minor Education.	All performing departments
Educational Skills for Creative Artists	In this course, students of Composition and Sonology discover new learning environments and then develop their own unique workshops and educational projects and manage creative activities.	Composition and Sonology
Training Orchestral Parts	The course teaches students who play an orchestral instrument all about playing in an orchestra. Trial auditions, an important element in preparing students for playing in a professional orchestra or an ensemble, are also organised.	Classical Music

Chamber Music / Orchestral Projects / Authentic String Quartet / Viol Consort / Recorder Consort / Broken Consort / Wind Ensemble / Jazz Ensemble / BASSbook / BRASSbook	Ensemble playing is a central component of the curricula of the Classical Music, Early Music and Jazz departments. In orchestras, ensembles and combos – where possible assembled and organised by the students themselves – students work on more than just playing music. The course also covers aspects such as teamwork, a project-based approach, organisation and acquiring intercultural skills.	Classical Music / Early Music / Jazz
Sound Engineering in Electronic Music	Sonology students receive regular instruction in the course of organising the technical aspects and logistics for five public concerts of electronic music that are given in the Conservatoire during the school year. Operating as a team, the knowledge the students acquire greatly enhances their professional opportunities and is not confined to particular genres. The final presentations take place every year in the form of a four-day mini-festival, for which the students also handle the sound engineering themselves.	Sonology
Technical skills	Sonology students follow a relatively large number of technical courses during their studies. They learn various computer languages, basic electronics, the physics of sound, studio technology, etc. These subjects are taught within an artistic context. The knowledge they acquire significantly improves their professional prospects within the creative industry.	Sonology
Exchange Workshops	Exchange Workshops represent an excellent opportunity to meet other students and to initiate collaborative projects. The workshops are followed by public presentations, which are jointly organised by the students.	Sonology, Composition & ArtScience

Composition projects	A large part of the education in the Composition department is based on projects. The students are given assignments to compose works for a specific professional, and often social, context. An example is the exceptional One Minute Symphony initiative in association with the Residentie Orkest.	Composition
Internship	A practical internship is an important component of the Bachelor programme in some departments.	Art of Sound, Theory of Music, Sonology, Music in Education
Electives and Minors	All Bachelor students have the chance to shape their own education by selecting courses from a range of electives and minors. In addition to our own selection of courses, students can also choose elective courses offered by Leiden University. The range of electives includes modules on production, entrepreneurship and cultural management.	All departments

An overview of courses relating to preparation for professional practice in the Master of Music:

## Master of Music

Course	Content
Introduction to Research in the Arts	Research plays a crucial role in the Master programmes at the Conservatoire. Students follow up the tutoring in the Bachelor programme by further developing their abilities as 'reflective practitioners' who are able to operate independently in a constantly changing professional practice.
Individual Research Trajectory	Under the supervision of a research supervisor, students carry out (artistic) research that is linked to the overarching Master Project.
Introduction to Project Management	A module originally developed in the Master programme 'New Audiences and Innovative Practice' (NAIP) covering commercial skills and the development of personal professional integration activities that can be linked to the Master Project.
Professional Integration Trajectory	For two years students are supervised by an external 'professional integration coach' (usually an expert from the profession) who helps them, individually or in small groups, to pursue their professional ambitions by organising their own professional integration activities, which in turn are closely connected to the overarching Master Project.
Master Circle	Master Circles are divided by focus area and occupy a central position in the Master Project. The circles encourage peer learning with students from both the first and the second year. With the master circle leader acting as facilitator, students can share experiences, ask questions and discuss solutions in relation to their progress with the Master Project. There is also room for discussion and students give (trial) presentations.
Career Development Office	The Career Development Office (CDO) occupies a key position in the Conservatoire by assisting students to find possibilities for concerts and other projects outside the institute. Bachelor and Master students can earn credits for professional activities organised outside the Conservatoire via the CDO. This unique arrangement encourages the students to take personal responsibility for finding and creating their own professional opportunities. Students are also expected to reflect on these professional activities.



Training Orchestral Parts	This course teaches students who play an orchestral instrument all there is to know about playing in an orchestra. Trial auditions, which are an important element in the preparation for playing in a professional orchestra or ensemble, are also organised.
Chamber Music / Orchestral Projects / Authentic String Quartet / Viol Consort / Recorder Consort / Broken Consort/ / Wind Ensemble / Jazz Ensemble / BASSbook	Ensemble playing is a central component of the curricula of the Classical Music, Early Music and Jazz departments. In orchestras, ensembles and combos – where possible assembled and organised by the students themselves – students work on more than just playing music. The course also covers aspects such as teamwork, project-based work, organisation and acquiring intercultural skills.
Sound Engineering in Electronic Music (Sonology)	Sonology students receive regular instruction in the course of organising the technical aspects and logistics for five public concerts of electronic music that are given in the Conservatoire during the school year. Operating as a team, the knowledge the students acquire greatly enhances their professional opportunities and is not confined to particular genres. The final presentations take place every year in the form of a four-day mini-festival, for which the students also handle the sound engineering themselves.

## Master Electives

Master students can choose one elective. In addition to our own range of courses, students can also choose from the courses offered by Leiden University.

Music around the Corner / De Wijkmuzikanten (elective)	In this elective, students organise a personal project that they produce and perform themselves as part of the production 'BuurtOpera' in Theater Dakota. During their project, Master students are asked to coach Bachelor students who have chosen the same elective.
Socially Engaged Artistic Practice: Music and Dementia (elective)	This course prepares students for a new professional activity involving giving performances in a medical context, in particular the care for elderly persons with dementia. The course is organised by the Master programme New Audiences and Innovative Practice (NAIP).
Socially Engaged Artistic Practice: ProMiMic – Meaningful Music in Healthcare (elective)	For the project Meaningful Music in Healthcare, small groups of musicians visit hospitals and perform music for and with patients on the basis of information gathered from interactions and conversations with the patient. Improvisation is an important element of this project, which is organised by the Master programme New Audiences and Innovative Practice (NAIP) and is derived from the work of the Lifelong Learning in Music research group at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen and the University Medical Centre Groningen.