

November 12, 2007

The James E. Rogers Institute for Orchestral and Opera Conducting

School of Music, The University of Arizona

Thomas Cockrell, Institute Director

Thanks to a generous gift from philanthropist James E. Rogers, The University of Arizona School of Music has established The Rogers Institute for Orchestral and Opera Conducting. Launching in August 2007 with its first studio of Rogers Conducting Fellows, the Institute will be a unique musical leadership program encompassing not only advanced training in conducting but also development of the additional skills needed to succeed first as a staff conductor and eventually a music director. In addition, the Institute offers a variety of supplementary musical and professional experiences. The Rogers Institute was founded to serve as a unique bridge to the conducting profession, a comprehensive program for training new musical leaders.

The program Unlike most graduate and summer programs in the USA, the Rogers Institute trains conductors for careers in both symphonic music and opera. This breadth of focus will cut a unique profile for the Rogers Fellow, giving him/her significant opportunities for technical refinement, artistic growth, and developing a career in the pit or on the concert podium. Rogers Fellows are coached and mentored principally by Dr. Thomas Cockrell, Director of Orchestral Activities and the Nelson Riddle Endowed Chair in Music. The number of fellows will be two or three, assuring the highest quality of instruction/coaching and most performance opportunities for each.

Rogers Fellows should have completed a master's degree in conducting and/or have had substantial experience on the podium. Those with completed doctorates or some doctoral work are also eligible and encouraged to apply. Whereas Rogers Fellows will enroll in the School's D.M.A. degree program, they choose to follow either the curriculum leading to completion of that degree, or selecting a custom-tailored track, not unlike that for an artist's diploma. Supplementing the curricula will be substantial additional training, outlined below. Length of participation in the Institute will be flexible by design, determined by the particular needs of the individual.

Rogers Fellows hold School of Music teaching assistantships for conducting in the UA orchestral and opera programs. These assistantships cover full tuition and fees, student health insurance, and pay a nine-month salary of approximately \$7000. In addition to a moving allowance, the Institute also supplies the supplemental, distinctive features of the program enumerated below, greatly increasing the value of a Rogers Institute Fellowship.

Bridging to the profession The most distinguishing feature of the Rogers Institute is its focus on serving as a bridge from graduate school training to the conducting profession. Some important opportunities afforded Rogers Institute Fellows include:

- *Professional experience.* Conducting student ensembles cannot adequately prepare young conductors for leading a professional orchestra or opera production. The Institute will provide opportunities to rehearse and perform with fine professional orchestras in Romania. Permission to record material for audition and promotional DVDs is anticipated.
- *Supplemental and summer study.* Rogers Fellows will receive additional stipends to help defray the expense of attending summer programs, master classes and other workshops.
- *Apprenticeships.* Rogers Fellows will have opportunities to apprentice, on a rotating basis, with professional organizations such as the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Arizona Opera and other organizations elsewhere. Fellows will serve as assistant conductors, attending rehearsals, covering performances, and honing the skills expected of a staff conductor. Apprenticeships may include introduction to a number of the organization's operations such as artistic administration, outreach, youth concerts/education, marketing/public relations, development, library procedures, etc.
- *Professional conferences.* Rogers Fellows and the director attend a major professional conference of the League of American Orchestras (formerly the American Symphony Orchestra League), Opera AMERICA, or the Conductor's Guild. These conferences offer important opportunities to sample the professional world, encounter new trends in the field and meet with career professionals.

Performance opportunities Rogers Fellows are given abundant opportunities on the podium with a variety of UA performing ensembles. Assignments are made on a rotating basis, assuring a breadth of experience.

- *UA Philharmonic.* Fellows share the conducting and administrative duties of the UA Philharmonic Orchestra with Professor Charles Bontrager, Assistant Director of Orchestral Activities. "The Phil" is the School's university orchestra, a mixture of music majors, minors and non majors. The Philharmonic rehearses four hours a week and presents two concerts each semester. Recent works performed include Hanson's Symphony No. 2 "Romantic," Mozart's Symphony No. 38, Dvořák's Symphony No. 8, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio Espagnol*, excerpts from Bizet's *Carmen* and a full staging of Haydn's one-act comedy *La Canterina* and with the UA Opera Theater.
- *Arizona Symphony Orchestra.* Fellows have both reading and performance opportunities with the School of Music's pre professional orchestra while serving as assistant conductors. All Rogers Fellows accompany student competition winners on the annual President's Concert each February.
- *Arizona Opera Theater.* As assistant conductor for the two annual UA Opera Theater

productions Fellows conduct musical and staging rehearsals culminating with “stepping in” to conduct most final performances. There are additional opportunities to serve as music director, coach, and conductor of opera scenes programs each semester.

- *More.* There are other possibilities to conduct on or off campus, such as choral, contemporary and *ad hoc* ensembles. In recent years orchestral conducting majors have musical theater productions in the School of Theatre Arts, including *Candide*, *Carousel*, and *Oklahoma!*

Institute Guest Professionals. The Institute will bring a variety of guest professionals to campus for short units of intensive and focused study. Guests will be not only conductors but other professionals engaged to assist in the training of well-rounded musical leaders. Local music directors and guest conductors will meet frequently with Rogers Fellows in seminar, masterclass or informally. Other conductors and professionals worldwide could be available through Internet2 distance masterclasses and video conferences.

Advanced conducting training. Young conductors benefit from instruction and coaching in a variety of forms. The Institute features:

- *The Rogers Orchestral Leadership Ensemble.* The Rogers Ensemble provides weekly coaching not only for the fellows but also the five Rogers Orchestral Leadership Assistants who serve as the principal string players of the Arizona Symphony and section coaches of the UA Philharmonic. While confronting and conducting the most challenging works of the core repertoire, special attention is also given to effective rehearsing, “tricks of the trade” and solidifying a compelling technique. The ensemble includes a staff pianist and occasionally expands to include winds and soloists.
- *Seminar.* Fellows and the Director meet regularly for sessions addressing a variety of pertinent subjects: score analysis, study and memorization skills, instrumentation, performance practice, in addition to topics listed below under “other skills and abilities.”
- *“Backburner” study time.* A priority of the Institute is to encourage fellows to devote several hours to daily score study: preparing works thoroughly for placement on the “back burner” for quick “reheating” when needed on short notice in the future.
- *Body effectiveness and expressivity.* Joseph Gifford, a Boston teacher with 25 years’ experience working with conductors in the ASOL Thulean Workshops, coaches fellows to become more effective and relaxed, communicators on and off the podium.

Other skills Rogers Institute Fellows are trained in a variety of personal, business and other skills needed to succeed in a highly competitive field. For this training the Institute draws

heavily from Camerata, the School's nationally-respected career development program, other university resources, and guest consultants. This training might include:

- *Personal time management and career planning.* Early in their residency fellows attend a Franklin Covey workshop to identify and refine goals, chart a path toward achieving them, and fine tune personal organization skills.
- *Public speaking and presentation skills.* Fellows work to hone public speaking and presentation skills, becoming more comfortable with concert introductions, donor relations, and social events. Special emphasis is placed on youth concert delivery and script development.
- *Programming.* Fellows study creative programming for symphonic, youth and pops concerts.
- *Professional dossier preparation.* Through Camerata, Institute conductors will study career strategies, create promotional materials and a personal website, financial planning, etc.
- *Innovation.* Fellows will have opportunities to study and apply the innovative use of Internet2 and digital recording technologies, blogging and new trends in concert delivery (PowerPoint, podcasts, etc.).
- *Recording.* The School of Music boasts a fine recording studio and a superb audio engineer. Fellows will be encouraged to study all aspects of audio production from microphone placement and recording through mastering and final production of a CD.
- *Supplementary studies.* The full resources of the School of Music and The University of Arizona are available to Rogers Fellows. They will be encouraged to strengthen their knowledge of the operatic languages of Italian, German and French.

Application and audition procedure Complete application and audition procedures is will be posted in mid November at: www.cfa.arizona.edu/Symphony/RogersInstitute

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