

# 2025 Aspen Conducting Academy and Aspen Conducting Academy Orchestra Program Manual

Information subject to change | Updated as of 6/13/2025

Congratulations on being selected for the 2025 Aspen Conducting Academy (ACA) class or a member of the Aspen Conducting Academy Orchestra! We very much look forward to your arrival in June. The general outline of the program is described below. Please direct any program or general questions to [studentservices@aspenmusic.org](mailto:studentservices@aspenmusic.org).

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## CONDUCTOR AUDITIONS WITH ORCHESTRA

Conductor Auditions is a required event for all conducting fellows and ACA orchestra fellows.

- Conducting Auditions will take place on **Saturday, June 28 at 1pm** in Hurst Hall on the Bucksbaum Campus with the full ACA orchestra.
- Conducting fellows will be notified of their specific audition repertoire through email by 5 pm on **June 25**.
- Conducting assignments will be determined based on the conducting audition, the videotape submitted with application materials, and experience.
- **Conductors must bring their instruments and are expected to play in the orchestra when not on the podium.**

## ORCHESTRA SEATING AUDITIONS

Orchestra seating auditions are required for all conducting fellows and ACA orchestra fellows. There are different processes for strings players and woodwinds, brass, percussion players as outlined below. More information about seating auditions will be distributed in the Audition Letter by **March 1**.

### Strings

ACA conductors and ACA orchestra fellows

- ACA orchestra string fellows will be evaluated for seating placement based on the audition materials submitted for admission. A separate seating audition is not required.
- Audition materials will be reviewed by Robert Spano and artist-faculty member **Renata Arado** for seating purposes only.

### Winds, Brass & Percussion

ACA conductors and ACA orchestra fellows

- ACA winds, brass, and percussion conductors and orchestra fellows are required to participate in an in-person seating audition.
- This audition will be heard by the respective department faculty and will enable faculty members to make appropriate assignments of other orchestra participants into the ACA Orchestra when needed.
- Information about the placement audition schedule and repertoire will be distributed by **March 1** in the Audition Letter. Conductor fellows and orchestra fellows are expected to prepare the same excerpts.

## SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

The ACA orchestra generally meets four-seven times per week with one day off per week. Services will take place in the morning or the afternoon. The orchestra takes a short hiatus at

the end of Week 4 for several days. To encourage physical wellness and participation in extracurricular offerings such as solo recital and chamber music, the AMFS makes an effort to limit the number of double service days. When possible, string seating assignments will be the same for programs and readings with the same repertoire, so musicians can focus on learning one part. Musicians in the Aspen Conducting Academy can expect the general outline of services below:

- Six standard orchestra concerts with performances weekly on Wednesdays at 5 pm in the Klein Music Tent.
- One orchestra concert to be conducted by Robert Spano on the Sunday of Week 5 at 4pm in the Klein Music Tent.
- Eight orchestra repertoire reading sessions with the ACA orchestra, one repertoire reading with the Aspen Festival Orchestra, and one repertoire reading with the Aspen Chamber Symphony.
- Three readings of compositions from the Susan and Ford Center for Composition Studies with the ACA Orchestra.
- Two Opera Encounters workshops at the historic Wheeler Opera House. Both workshops involve ACA conductors with singers and pianists.

A sample weekly schedule may be as follows (please note that weeks with Composer Readings and Opera Encounters will follow a slightly different pattern):

Monday: occasional evening rehearsal

Tuesday: morning rehearsal

Wednesday: morning dress rehearsal and afternoon concert

Thursday: usually a dark day

Friday: morning rep read

Saturday: morning rehearsal and four occasions for afternoon technique check (conductors)

Sunday: morning rehearsal

## ACA CURRICULUM AND EXPECTATIONS (Conductors Only)

Members of the ACA Orchestra should see the Orchestra Manual (available on the [AMFS Student Portal](#)) for details regarding orchestra expectations and curriculum.

### Attendance

- Students are expected to adhere to the [Leave of Absence Policy](#) on the AMFS website and submit Leave of Absence Requests through the [AMFS Student Portal](#).

### Kick-Off Meeting

- All ACA conductors are required to attend a program kick-off meeting with Maestro Spano on **Monday, June 30 from 2:30-6:30 pm** in Friedman Atrium.

## Orchestra Participation

- ACA conductors are required to bring their instruments to Aspen. When not on the podium, conductors play as members of the ACA Orchestra. It is part of the educational concept of the program for conductors to benefit from playing under the direction of their colleagues.
- ACA conductors whose instrument is the piano are expected to play orchestral piano, celesta, and other keyboard parts.
- These parts must be prepared to performance standard in advance.
- When not playing or conducting, conductors should attend all ACA services. Cell phone use during rehearsals is prohibited.

## Assignments and Repertoire

- The [ACA Repertoire List](#) including concert programs, audition, reading repertoire, and tech check repertoire is available on the [AMFS Student Portal](#). Any revisions updated in this document will be communicated by email.
- Selection of repertoire and assignments will be made based on a variety of artistic and pedagogical considerations.
- Repertoire requests will be reviewed based on the form submitted through the [AMFS Student Portal](#). Requested assignments are not guaranteed.
- Directly after the conducting auditions, Maestro Spano will make assignments for the first few weeks and then during the third week, he will make the assignments for the rest of the summer.
- ACA Orchestra Managers will distribute copies of all assignments to conductors.
- Conductors should never get on the podium unprepared. Tell the ACA Orchestra Managers immediately if you are not ready to lead a work; however conductors are expected to prepare all assigned repertoire.

## SCORE EXPECTATIONS

ACA conductors are encouraged to bring as many scores as possible to Aspen. The AMFS has an extensive library of scores and parts, but conductors may not be able to mark them and will not be able to take them following the performance. Scores cannot be purchased in Aspen, as we do not have a music store.

- ACA conductors are required to have scores for the entire audition repertoire.
- ACA conductors are required to have scores for all technique check repertoire.
- ACA conductors are strongly encouraged to provide their own scores for orchestral repertoire.
- The AMFS provides scores for all concerti. If the piece is a rental, then the score will be collected with the rest of the practice parts after the performance and destroyed. The AMFS recommends conductors scan or make a copy of the score if they prefer to preserve a record of their markings.
- An AMFS provided score will be bound with no cover and no backing.
- Specific editions are not required. You may use what is available to you. If you have a question about a specific edition, you may ask the Head Librarian after **March 1**.

- If you are assigned a piece and do not own the score, you may obtain one from the AMFS library. Once assignments are released, please notify the ACA librarian team so they have time to prepare a score. Please allow for at least three days.
- Unassigned conductors may obtain a score from the AMFS library, on a first-come, first-serve basis. Once assignments are released, please notify the ACA librarian team so they have time to prepare a score. Please allow for at least three days.
- ACA conductors can bring scores with them to Aspen or mail scores after **June 15** to:  
Name  
Aspen Music Festival & School  
225 Music School Rd  
Aspen CO 81611

## Podium Time

- We anticipate ACA conductors will have at least 30 minutes of podium time in most weeks, though this cannot be guaranteed.
- A master conductor oversees all sessions, offering advice and comments. Maestro Spano will be present at rehearsals and repertoire reading sessions, with guest conductors participating through the summer in score study sessions.
- Guest conductors for the 2025 season include Hugh Wolff, Mark Stringer, Patrick Summers, and Enrique Mazzola.

## Video Camera and Recordings

- ACA Orchestra Managers will record all sessions with the Festival's HD video camera.
- Conductors need to bring a 32 GB SDHC card or larger for video recordings. SD cards are required for the first session, which is the Conductor Auditions on **June 28**.
- Conductors are responsible for giving their SD cards to the ACA Orchestra Managers, prior to the beginning of each session in which they are conducting.
- If you wish to use your own recording device, you will be responsible for its operation.
- Conducting videos will be reviewed during video review sessions with guest faculty.
- Services done in front of an audience (concerts and opera scenes) will be recorded on the ACA SD card by the ACA Orchestra Managers as one piece and then spliced and made available to the conductors through Starchive. ACA Orchestra Managers will communicate specific instructions before the first concert.

## Supplemental Rehearsal and Performance Observations

- All ACA conductors are required to attend rehearsals of other orchestras, especially those conducted by the visiting guest conductors.
- Taking the opportunity to observe orchestra preparation and performance by the array of faculty and guest conductors is considered part of the curriculum. Generally, the class attends all orchestra rehearsals and concerts as a group whenever there isn't a conflict with the ACA schedule.

## ADDITIONAL CLASSES (conductors only)

Visit the Class and Non-Orchestral Performance Schedule (to be available electronically through the AMFS Student Portal in June) for a complete listing of classes, locations, and dates. Be sure to check this schedule regularly, as it will continue to be updated throughout the summer season.

### Technique and Score-Reading Sessions

- All pianist conductors will play for Technique check sessions on four occasions during the summer unless otherwise specified.
- These parts must be prepared to performance standard in advance.
- Repertoire is available through the ACA Repertoire list on your [AMFS Student Portal](#).

### Seminar Classes

- Additional classes with faculty and guest conductors may be held several times per season, on both musical and extra-musical topics.
- Topics may include the roles and responsibilities of the music director, the role of the concertmaster, specific instrumental techniques (ex. harp and percussion), programming and organizational structure at various arts institutions, and communication.
- Attendance at seminar classes is required for ACA conductors.

### Video Review Sessions

- Video recordings of ACA conductors will be reviewed during several sessions throughout the summer. These sessions will be scheduled and communicated by the ACA Orchestra Managers.

### Livestream Score Reading

- Conducting fellows will each be assigned to a livestreamed concert in order to assist the Livestream Director with cuing. Fellows will be required to assist with the assigned performance only. These assignments will be communicated by the ACA managers at the beginning of the season.

## Summary of Deadlines

Visit the [AMFS Student Portal](#) to access required forms and additional information.

Deadline	Subject	Description
December 16	ACA Repertoire List	Repertoire available through the ACA Repertoire document on the AMFS Student Portal
March 1	Audition Letter Available	Includes details about audition repertoire, dates, and times
May 15	Seating Auditions - Winds, Brass, Percussion	Sign up for an in-person seating audition time through the form on the AMFS Student Portal. Sign up will be available starting March 15.
May 15	Repertoire Request Form	ACA Conductor Repertoire Request form due through the AMFS Student Portal.
June 15	Score Mailing	Scores mailed to Aspen will be received starting June 15. See address details above.
June 25	Audition Repertoire Announced	ACA Orchestra Managers will email audition repertoire assignments by 5pm.
June 28	Conductor Auditions with the ACA Orchestra	Required for ACA conductors and ACA orchestra members. SD Cards required for video camera.
June 30	Kick-Off Meeting with Maestro Spano	Required event for ACA conductors.