Study guide

Royal Conservatoire Antwerp

Conducting

AP HOGESCHOOL ANTWERPEN

Academic year 2026—2027

Content

1 Foreword *3*

2 Organigram *3*

3 Orchestra conducting *3*

3.1 Introduction to orchestra conducting 4

3.2 Orchestra conducting subsidiary course 4

3.3 Master orchestra conducting 6

4 Choir conducting *7*

4.1 Introduction to choir conducting 1-5 7

4.2 Master choir conducting 8

5 Wind & brassband conducting *9*

5.1 Introduction to Wind & brassband conducting 1-5 9

5.2 Master Wind & brassband conducting 10

6 Part-time study *11*

7 Working student *11*

8 Listening internship *11*

1 Foreword

If you conduct for 10 years you might be a conductor, if you conduct for 20 years you might be a good conductor. (Bruno Walter)
Students who start studying conducting at a conservatory often have little or no practical experience. The Royal Conservatory of Antwerp therefore offers the conducting course in two parts:

- Introduction to conducting: Choral conducting, HaFaBra conducting (levels 1 to 5)
- Introduction to orchestral conducting 1
- Secondary orchestral conducting levels 1 to 4
- Preparatory year for the Master program in Conducting (transfer students)
- Master's degree in Conducting (M1 and M2)

Introduction to Conducting is aimed at transferring the basics of conducting to the students, allowing them to learn about percussion technique, ear training, instrumentation, orchestration, analysis, rehearsal technique ...
The aim of the Master program is to train professional conductors. This requires a great deal of basic knowledge. This will be tested in an admission test that is decisive as admission to the program.
A preparatory year is strongly recommended, in which students can combine the Introduction to Conducting lessons with a refresher of relevant supporting course units from the bachelor's program. Certain subjects from the master's conducting can be spread over 3 years during the preparatory year. A valid alternative for the preparatory year is a part-time study track in Ma1. (See also point 6)
The course Introduction to Conducting is recommended as preparation, but does not automatically lead to admission to the Master program Conducting or the preparatory year for the Master program Conducting.

2 Organigram

Department representative: Luc Anthonis

Introduction to Conducting
Introduction to Hafabra, Choir and Orchestra conducting level 1 - elective course 3 credits
Introduction to Hafab radio correction levels 2-5 - elective course 6 credits
Introduction to Choir Conducting levels 2-5 - elective course 3 credits
Orchestral conducting side course 2-5 - elective course 3 credits

Master programme conducting
Master 1 Conducting 21 credits
Master exam Conducting 18 credits

Teachers
Orchestral conducting teacher: Ivo Venkov
Teachers Choral conducting: Luc Anthonis, Marlene The Boo, Geert Hendrix
Teachers Hafabra conducting: Steven Verhaert
Teacher Arranging Hafabra: Jan Van der Roost

3 Orchestra conducting

Conducting is re-creating and the material (the score), learning to decode and convert it into sound is a fascinating journey.
The KCA wants to develop an awareness of how complex this passion is and let the student grow in his possibilities to transform the dream into a first awareness of reality. Understanding, awareness, insight, mastering matter, imagination and empathy are the tools to develop a personality.

Thorough knowledge of all parameters and flexible, fast learning to deal with them, is the basis to give the 'instrument' (ensemble, orchestra) the chance to function optimally and to transform the group dynamics into communication with the audience.

In Max Rudolf's Grammar of Conducting, the conductor is defined as:
Part musician, part actor, the conductor pursues a craft which is not easily defined. ... The conductor must be a trained musician, must know how to work with people in a group, and must be able to convey his intentions to his players by means of gestures

3.1 Introduction to orchestra conducting

Info meeting before being allowed to the course: 19 September 10h
Period September to December
Reading time: classes are taught in groups only (students get 1 hour of group lessons).
Learning content: lessons are given on percussion technique only: conducting diagrams in 1,2,3,4,5.
and so on; subdividing; dynamic differences; indicating tempo, decelerating, accelerating,
fermate, ...

Period January to June
Reading time: after the three months individual lessons are given.
Learning Content: Students continue at their level (working from early Baroque to the beginning of the 20th century).
Minimum program: two parts of a concerto grosso, one fast and one slow part or
an overture with an equivalent structure.
Maximum program: no upper limit.

Final goal of the first year: to have basic knowledge of all aspects of conducting.
Exam: conducting the prepared work in class. During the exam there will also be a small hearing test. Points: 60% on the exam, 40% on permanent evaluation.
The exam determines whether the student may continue in the secondary subject of orchestral conducting or do not.

Expectations of the students
The following is expected from everyone:

- Regular attendance, individual independent work;
- be able to work in groups and take initiative:
- collaborate with all fellow students of orchestral conducting in order to organize and work out projects (putting together an orchestra, recording rooms, making promotional material, arranging parties,...);
- participation in any small or larger project of the orchestra conducting class is obligatory.

3.2 Orchestra conducting subsidiary course

General
The students can follow "Secondary subject orchestral conducting" for a maximum of four years. This course is only
admitted for students after an admission test. This exam takes place at the
end of the first year. Anyone who has followed the first year is allowed to do so.
participate.

Planning courses

The lessons are individual. Presence and observation of the work of other students is strongly recommended.

Course models
Lessons are given in four different ways: with piano; with music installation (CD or other audio device); without music (in silence); with practice ensemble or small orchestra, creating a small orchestra on a voluntary basis - collaboration of all students in the classroom.

Lesson Contents: Work is done from the period of the Classicism until the beginning of the 20th century

- Secondary course 1: minimal program: two classical symphonies by Haydn & Mozart.
- Secondary course 2: minimal program: three classical symphonies by Mozart & Beethoven.
- Secondary course 3: minimal program: four classical or romantic symphonies by Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann.
- Secondary course 4: minimal program: four classical or romantic symphonies by Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Tschaikovsky etc...

Maximum program for all years: not determined, the pace is set by the student himself determined.

Participation in and organization of projects with the whole class is mandatory.

Number of projects: minimum 1, maximum 5 per year
All these projects have an educational role in the first place.
The project entails the following:

- Determine the program under the supervision of the teacher;
- meeting with all fellow students and planning rehearsals and concerts at times that suit everyone in the class;
- looking for volunteer musicians;
- collaborating with other students as soloist (instrumental, vocal);
- preparing the scores: making copies and distributing them among the musicians;
- designing posters and advertising;
- constructing and dismantling the rehearsal and concert hall (if a concert is planned);
- rehearsing the scores;
- participating in the rehearsals as a conductor and conducting the concert if a concert is planned (the project may only end with a dress rehearsal or tone moment).

Individual approach towards each student is one of the important points of attention within the learning process:

- Insight when studying a score;
- Developing their own way of memorizing,
- Further develop percussion technique,
- instrumental problems within the orchestra;
- style differences with composers, style differences with other conductors and schools;
- individual possibilities of expression;
- ect.

Expectations of the students
- Individual independent work;
- be able to work in a group and take initiative;
- collaborate with all fellow students of orchestral conducting in order to organize and develop projects (see introduction to orchestral conducting).

Exam: conducting a slow and a fast movement of a symphony, hearing test

Points: 60% on the exam; 40% permanent evaluation (permanent evaluation during the year includes: independent work (homework); performance in classes; attendance; participation in projects; cooperation with all other students).

3.3 Master orchestra conducting

Two years Master program for developing skills in conducting opera and symphonic repertoire.
Goals include: enrichment of manual technique; analysis (from a conductor's perspective); historical evolution and stylistic differences; interpretation; strong, creative personality.
This subject is only admitted for students after an admission test.

Reading times:
The lessons are individual. The "manual technique is unique", which is why the conducting lessons are offered individually. The difficulty of the repertoire is determined by the abilities and level of the student.

Course content: We work from Classicism to contemporary music.

Forms of work:
With piano; with music installation (CD or other audio device); without music (in silence); with rehearsal ensemble - string quartet and piano or small orchestra; the student has the opportunity during his training to gain different orchestral experiences - (creating a small orchestra on a voluntary basis - cooperation of all students in the classroom).

Per academic year the student follows 2 listening internships (see point 8) in the Philharmonie or Opera; 1 assistance in the Opera; project with ensemble XXI in the conservatoire, practice platform in the opera classroom; etc.

Expectations of the students
The following is expected from everyone:
- be creative;
- individual independent work;
- be able to work in a group and take initiation: working together with all fellow students.
orchestral conducting in order to organize and elaborate projects (see introduction to orchestral conducting);
- participating in any small or larger project of the orchestra conducting class; attendance.

Evaluation:
Orchestral conducting exam (M1)
The annual exam consists of two partial tests during the second semester of the academic year for a total of 100% of the points.

Exam program:

- Practical test - the student's conducting skills are evaluated during the course of the year in all projects (for 50% of the points).
- A test with pianos (four parts of a romantic symphony), in which the student is questioned about the seen subject matter (for 50% of the points).

Master thesis Orchestra Conducting (M2)
Public final test, consisting of subsequent partial tests, during the second semester of the academic year.
Exam program:

- Exam rehearsal: the jury attends a rehearsal (for 50% of the points).

- Exam concert: the jury attends a concert (for 50% of the points). The student conducts an orchestra (own or composed) in a varied program of minimum 45 minutes. Program to be discussed with the teacher.

If the examination programme includes compositions that require amplification and/or audio or video equipment, please contact the Contemporary Music Working Group (WHAM) via nico.couck@ap.be to draw up or submit a technical specification.

4 Choir conducting

4.1 Introduction to choir conducting 1-5

The classes Introduction to Choir Conducting are grouped per academic year. The first year introduction to Choir Conducting is given in groups of max. 8 students (usually the groups are smaller). On the basis of a level test, the student is placed in the appropriate level group.

A student can enter Introduction to Choir Conducting at any time during their studies, students from e.g. instrument Bachelor 3 can follow Introduction to Choir Conducting 1.
Introduction to Choir Conducting looks at the profile of a choral conductor from a basic perspective. It is a general education with, among other things, percussion technique exercises and short choir pieces.

All students of Choir Conducting form a practice choir (1st semester bi-weekly, 2nd semester weekly) and function as each other's working instrument. Choir Conducting students can alternately work with this practice choir in the presence of the Choir Conducting teachers. During the first semester mainly the students Master Choral Conducting, in the second semester the students from Introduction to Choir Conducting get more and more attention.

Level test Choral conducting
When: 17 September 9h followed by the general info meeting for all choir conducting students at 10h till 12h
Content of the test:
- Chord pitching with tuning fork;
- hearing test;
- Conducting a choral work or national anthem of your choice; if the student has no conducting experience yet, the student will be tested in another way;
- exploratory conversation.

Practical: contact Luc Anthonis (luc.anthonis@ap.be)

Evaluation Introduction to Choir Conducting
Practical test during the second semester of the academic year for 100% of the points.
The exam for Introduction to choir direction 1 and 2 is taken together before an internal jury.
The students form each other's choir.
Examination program:
- Conducting exercise
- Chord pitching
- Prima vista reading
- Rehearsal of a prepared choral piece with the practice choir

4.2 Master choir conducting

The study Master Choir Conducting includes a further deepening of the percussion technique, further analysis with a view to accelerating the rehearsal process, communication with the choir and the further development of the choir repertoire with a view to concerts.

The Master Choir Conductinglessons are offered individually. The student prefers to be the conductor of an (amateur) choir. The rehearsals of this choir are visited by the teacher so that he can give directions on the spot and from there he can continue the training in the individual lessons. The repertoire includes works from the Renaissance to the present day.
During the training the student has the opportunity to have different choir experiences: conducting a chamber choir, pre-professional choir (the conductor choir), the amateur choir of the student, the choirs of the teachers, ...

In addition, the students follow literature study (By Geert Hendrix), classroom lessons for all students Master Choral conducting.
All stylistic periods are covered (from Renaissance to contemporary choral music) and are discussed through scores, listening examples, ... The students provide their own choral literature that is discussed in groups.

There are also group lessons (by Marleen De Boo) addressing didactics, analysis of choral pieces to prepare rehearsals, compose programmes,…
Per academic year the student follows 2 listening internships. This can be at the Flemish Radio Choir, Collegium Vocale Gent, Operakoor of the Vlaamse Opera, ... or (for Dutch students) a (semi-) professional company in the Netherlands, ...

Procedure internships (see point 8)
The student chooses a production from the selected offer in consultation with the teacher. The repertoire is prepared and discussed with the teacher. The student makes his own image of the repertoire and follows during the production the progress during the rehearsals of the choir.
The student makes a written reflection of this and mentions the differences between his interpretation and that of the conductor. About this matter the student has an hour of discussion with the conductor on which he can test his vision against the vision of the conductor and also discuss it.
The student attends a concert at which the repertoire is performed and reports on this as well.
During the production week the student will also be coached by the teacher if necessary.

Evaluation

Year exam (M1)
The annual exam consists of two partial tests during the second semester of the academic year for a total of 100% of the points.
Exam program:

- A practical test, in which a rehearsal with the student choir or the conductor choir is evaluated.
- A theoretical test, in which the student is questioned about the course content (including conducting exercises, chord intonation, prima vista singing, conducting of 2 pieces with recording,…)

More information about Master's thesis Research and lecture performance can be found in the study guide Master's thesis Research and lecture performance.
Detailed information on the evaluation and final competences can be found in the digital study guide.
If the examination programme includes compositions that require amplification and/or audio or video equipment, please contact the Contemporary Music Working Group (WHAM) via nico.couck@ap.be to draw up or submit a technical specification.

5 Wind & brassband conducting

5.1 Introduction to Wind & brassband conducting 1-5

The lessons Introduction to HaFaBra conducting are taught semi-individually. The program is set up according to the starting level of the student, which is determined by a level test.

The subjects include percussion technique, ear training, analysis, instrument knowledge and transposition.
The repertoire includes works in all genres of the present and previous century. From level 2 onwards, the above-mentioned subject will be supplemented with a separate course in orchestration and arrangement for HaFaBra orchestras.

Level test Introduction Hafabra conducting: 17 September 12:30h

Content of the test:

- Practical test with CD (conducting a work of your choice - minimum level of Flamo repertoire list 1st division excellence);
- Hearing test (recognizing distances and chords, always related to the conducted work);
- questions about instruments from the hafabra world;
- exploratory conversation.
- Practical: contact Luc Anthonis (luc.anthonis@ap.be). Candidate students should also contact Steven Verhaert prior to the test, in function of the choice of works to be conducted: steven.verhaert@ap.be.

Evaluation
All exams Introduction to HaFaBra conducting are individual.

Evaluation in level 1
Practical test with CD during the second semester of the academic year for 100% of the points for an internal jury.

Evaluation from level 2
Practical test during the second semester of the academic year for 100% of the points for an internal jury, consisting of two partial tests:

- Arrangement (for 30% of the points) of which 15% for permanent evaluation and 15% for the exam assignment arrangement.
- Practical trial Hafabra conducting with CD, for 70% of the points
- The student must obtain at least half of the points on both parts in order to succeed.

The examination assignment Arrangement must be submitted to the teacher Arrangement at the latest on June 1, so that the jury can review the realization prior to the practical test Hafabra conducting.
Arrangement is an obligatory part of the course. Through the Permanent Evaluation part, the presence of the student in the lessons will be evaluated. If the student fails in this part, he will be excluded from further participation in the practical trial Hafabra-direction.

In level 3, 4 and 5 the difficulty level of the works to be conducted is determined in the practical test and the student presents one or more works of level honorary/superior department can conduct.

Instrumentation 1-2
Forms of evaluation: final examination, oral discussion and evaluation of annual work and general professional knowledge, assessment of the performance of an arrangement or transcription for wind orchestra.

Evaluation standards: passed with orchestrations and interrogation positively assessed by the examination committee

5.2 Master Wind & brassband conducting

The study Master HaFaBra conducting includes a further deepening of the percussion technique, further analysis with a view to accelerating the rehearsal process, communication with the orchestra, and the further development of the HaFaBra repertoire with a view to concerts.

The Master HaFaBra conducting lessons are offered individually. The student prefers to be the conductor of a highly qualified (amateur) orchestra. The rehearsals of this orchestra are attended by the teacher. The functioning "on the work floor" will of course be followed up during the individual lessons.

The literature study part is given to all students master HaFaBra conducting.

Per academic year 2 listening internships are mandatory (see point 8). The student follows one or more rehearsals (and if possible a concert) in which he/she studies the played repertoire beforehand with the subject teacher. During the rehearsals the student compares the realized vision of the conductor with his own vision. Afterwards, the student makes a written report on the rehearsal process, supplemented with his own reflections, comparisons, ...

For this purpose the following possibilities are suggested:

- KHSC Zele (a few consecutive rehearsals)
- KHSC Schelle (rehearsals to be arranged with the subject teacher)
- Kortrijk Brass Band (a few consecutive rehearsals)
- Koninklijke Muziekkapel van de Gidsen (production week: rehearsal process of several consecutive days with concert)
- KF Kempenbloei Achel (several consecutive rehearsals)
- Festival Brass Band (several consecutive rehearsals)

Evaluation

M1 annual exam

The annual exam M1 consists of three partial tests, during the second semester of the academic year for a total of 100% of the points and for an internal jury.

Exam program:

- practical test, in which the student's conducting skills are evaluated, for 50% of the points
- Theoretical test, in which the student is questioned about the learning material seen, for 20% of the points.
- written test Arrangement/orrchestration (for 30% of the points) of which 15% for permanent evaluation and 15% for the exam assignment arrangement/orrchestration.

Master exam Ma 2

Public final test, consisting of 2 partial tests, during the second semester of the academic year and for a total of 100% of the points. The jury consists of conducting teachers from the conservatoire supplemented with external experts from the field.

Exam program:

- An exam rehearsal, for 50% of the points. The student rehearses, in the presence of the jury, about 1 hour with a wind orchestra or equivalent (ad hoc) ensemble on a part of the program for the exam concert. The jury tests the student's reflection.

- The exam concert(s), for 50% of the points. The student will conduct the conservatory's wind orchestra (max. 30 minutes) and/or an equivalent (ad hoc) ensemble (min. 30 minutes). In total the student brings a diverse program of approximately 1 hour, composed in consultation with the head teacher. In addition to the fixed parts (overture, own arrangement, the main work, ...) one or more soloists will preferably be accompanied.

If the student makes use of the Harmony Orchestra of the Conservatoire, he/she has to take into account the available standard staff when choosing the program.
If the examination programme includes compositions that require amplification and/or audio or video equipment, please contact the Contemporary Music Working Group (WHAM) via nico.couck@ap.be to draw up or submit a technical specification.
More information on Master's thesis Research and lecture performance can be found in the study guide Master's thesis Research and lecture performance.

6 Part-time study

During the entrance examination for the Master's degree programme in conducting, it is possible that you will be proposed to take M1 part-time (i.e. in two years) or to follow a preparatory year. This gives you an extra year of study to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills or, for example, not to let your instrument master's thesis coincide with your executive master's thesis.

7 Working student

If you combine work and study, it is best to apply for student work status. This status gives you the opportunity to plan your studies better.

For this you need to follow the procedure for individual adjustments via DigitAP.
Contact person for this is student counselor Magda Thielemans.

You have the right to request individual adaptations but it is the Admissions Board that decides on each individual case.
- For Analysis the following appointments can be requested from the Admissions Board.
- You need to prepare the following for your application Individual adjustments

You also need to take care of the following:
- Make an appointment as soon as possible with the teachers of the subjects for which you want to request an exception and prepare this interview by reading the vade-mecum of that subject.
- For master's students in conducting who already obtained an instrument master and specialize in the master's conducting. For Analysis, subject to other agreements with the teacher, the following agreements may apply:
    - Read Elementa (can be found on DigitAP)
    - Write a report about the analyses you do on 2/3 work during the board lessons and mail it to your teacher and Wim Henderickx.
    - In consultation with your teacher, select a work for your exam task and then submit it to Wim Henderickx and your teacher before the agreed deadline.

8 Listening internship

All master's students in conducting are required to complete two listening internships per level. One or more rehearsals (and possibly the concert) of a specific production by a (semi-)professional choir or orchestra.
A written report must be submitted containing the following information:
- Date of listening internship
- Orchestra or choir of the listening internship
- Conductor

- Program of the rehearsal(s)
- Report of the rehearsal
- Positive points for you as a conducting student (what can you take away from this rehearsal for your own work)
- Negative points for you as a conducting student (what stands out to you that you would rather not take away for your own work)

These reports must be sent to the department head (luc.anthonis@ap.be) no later than two weeks after the internship.