

# WESTMINSTER CHOIR COLLEGE

Westminster is a residential college of music located on a 23-acre campus in Princeton, N.J. Its typical student body includes 330 enrolled in the four-year undergraduate programs leading to the Bachelor of Music degree and the combined five-year Bachelor of Music/Master of Arts in Teaching degrees; 110 graduate students working toward the Master of Music and Master of Music Education degrees; and 20 non-degree candidates. Its programs of study are career-oriented and designed to prepare graduates for music leadership in churches, schools and communities. Concentrated performance study is offered in voice, organ, piano and conducting.

The choral music experience represents the most distinctive feature of Westminster. Daily rehearsals, supported by intensive musical skills development and by the study of voice and conducting, constitute the foundation of the choral program. At the center of all curricula are the large ensembles: the Chapel Choir, Schola Cantorum and Symphonic Choir. Smaller ensemble experience is afforded by Westminster Choir, Jubilee Singers, Kantorei, Williamson Voices, Master Singers, Concert Bell Choir and Opera Theater. Preparation of works for performance and touring takes precedence at times over all facets of collegiate life.

## History

In the belief that a choir of volunteer singers could be trained to perform on a professional level, John Finley Williamson established the Westminster Choir in 1920 at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Dayton, Ohio. The national prominence achieved by this choir and Dr. Williamson's conviction that churches could best be served by dedicated, professionally trained musicians led him to found Westminster Choir School at the Dayton church in 1926.

In 1929 the college moved to Ithaca, N.Y., and became associated with what is now Ithaca College, where a four-year program leading to the Bachelor of Music degree was instituted. Relocated in Princeton, N.J., in 1932, it added a master's program in 1934 and became known as Westminster Choir College in 1939.

The move to Princeton was motivated by a desire to provide ready access to the great metropolitan centers and orchestras of the eastern seaboard. Since then the Westminster Symphonic Choir has performed hundreds of times and made many recordings with the principal orchestras of New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Pittsburgh, Boston and Atlanta. Conductors of the choir have included Bernstein, Ormandy, Steinberg, Stokowski, Toscanini and Walter, and such contemporary figures as Abbado, Boulez, Chailly, Leinsdorf, Levine, Masur, Mehta, Muti, Ozawa, Robertson, Sawallisch and Shaw. The choir has also received numerous invitations over the years to sing with such touring orchestras as the Berlin Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw and the Vienna Philharmonic.

The institution has expanded in more recent decades by adding programs in music education, performance, composition, music theater and a Bachelor of Arts in Music degree. In 2007 Westminster Choir College became a division of Rider University's Westminster College of the Arts. Although it has never had a formal affiliation with any church, its programs draw students from most denominations of the Judeo-Christian heritage.

## Mission Statements

### Westminster College of the Arts

Westminster College of the Arts educates and trains aspiring performers, artists, teachers and students with artistic interests, to pursue professional, scholarly and lifelong personal opportunities in art, dance, music and theater. The College consists of three divisions: Westminster Choir College, the School of Fine and Performing Arts and Westminster Conservatory, a community music school. Through innovative and integrated programs and a commitment to discipline and excellence, the College serves as a cultural force within the university and community.

### Westminster Choir College

Westminster Choir College is a professional college of music with a unique choral emphasis that prepares undergraduate and graduate students for careers in performance, teaching, sacred music and composition. In an atmosphere that encourages personal and musical growth and nurtures leadership qualities, Westminster Choir College complements professional training in music with studies in the liberal arts. Founded for Christian service, Westminster Choir College was a pioneer in establishing the highest standards in choral performance and church music. Today, the curriculum teaches pluralism and holds service through music to be ennobling, liberating and integral to a rewarding and productive life.

### The School of Fine and Performing Arts

The School of Fine and Performing Arts focuses on art, dance, music, music theater, theater and arts administration. Through programs that provide a historical, aesthetic, practical and professional perspective, students develop the skills to excel in a professional career while growing intellectually from a broadly based liberal arts curriculum. The School fosters meaningful engagement in the arts to students who wish to become professional artists as well as students who view the arts as an integral part of overall intellectual growth. The School nurtures and challenges the artist within all students and prepares them to contribute to an ever-changing global society.

### Westminster Conservatory of Music

For more than 40 years Westminster Conservatory of Music has served the Central New Jersey/Eastern Pennsylvania area with on-campus and community-based music instruction. The community music school of Westminster College of the Arts, it offers a superior faculty and tailors lessons, workshops and classes to the needs of the individual student.

Music study at the Conservatory provides a unique opportunity for musical growth and is available to students of all ages and stages of advancement. It also offers many opportunities to perform through its community choral, orchestral and theater ensembles. In addition to its program on the Westminster Choir College campus in Princeton, the Conservatory offers classes at extensions in Lawrenceville and South Brunswick, N.J. and in Newtown and Yardley, Pa.

## Accreditation

Westminster has been fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) since 1941. It has held accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools since 1966 and remains accredited as a college within Rider University. The undergraduate program in music education was approved by the State of New Jersey in 1961 and leads to certification to teach public school music, K-12. This program was also approved in 1974 by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), facilitating transfer of teaching certificates to any of the participating states, and in 1995 by the National Council for the

Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which now is known as the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

## Continuing Education

Westminster offers summer workshops and festivals covering a wide range of subjects and techniques within the field of music. Workshops are open to all Westminster students, to professional musicians and teachers and to the general public. Graduate credits may be earned through participation in workshops. The Office of Continuing Education also presents residential high school and middle school summer programs in the form of a two-week Vocal Institute and a series of one-week programs in voice, organ, piano, composition and music theater.

## Westminster Conservatory

The Westminster Conservatory is the community music school division of the College of the Arts. It serves Central New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania with high quality music instruction in piano, voice, brass, woodwinds, strings, theory, composition, and percussion. Westminster Choir College students receive a discount on lessons through the Conservatory. Non-credit instruction is open to all ages and levels of ability from 12 months of age through senior citizens, for the serious musician and for the amateur. Students at the college have the opportunity to observe lessons, to study privately those instruments not taught within the college curriculum and, in some cases, to teach on the junior faculty of the Conservatory.

## Buildings and Resources

Williamson Hall is named for the college founders, John Finley and Rhea B. Williamson. With Bristol, Taylor and Erdman Halls, it is one of the original buildings on the campus. Many faculty departmental offices and administrative offices may be found here. The first floor includes an informal recital facility.

Chapel services, convocations and recitals take place in Bristol Hall, jointly dedicated to Lee Hastings Bristol, Jr., the third president of Westminster Choir College, and to his father, Lee Hastings Bristol. Located on the upper level is Bristol Chapel with its Aeolian-Skinner organ, completely refinished tonally in 1983. The lower level houses Noack and Fisk organs, an electronic keyboard lab, and Sacred Music departmental offices.

Westminster's newest building, the Marion Buckelew Cullen Center, opened in September 2014, and is named in honor of the philanthropist who made a \$5 million bequest to Westminster Choir College. The signature space in the building is Hillman Performance Hall, a 3,000 square-foot performance and rehearsal space named in recognition of the Henry L. Hillman Foundation, which provided a \$3 million grant to support the project. The Center includes three flexibly configured classrooms, a large lobby and a green room.

Talbott Library Learning Center memorializes Katharine Houk Talbott, one of the leading benefactors of the college during its earliest days in Dayton, Ohio. A multi-purpose building, it includes classrooms as well as the Music Computing Center and the Arts and Sciences Media Center. The Music Computing Center includes fifteen Kurzweil PC88 synthesizers and fifteen Macintosh computers. The Media Center includes 25 Windows-based computers with notation and sequencing capabilities. A complete description of library facilities is given at the end of this section.

The Robert L. Annis Playhouse is named for the Dean/Director of Westminster Choir College, who served from 1994-2014, and under

whose leadership the Westminster College of the Arts was launched.

The Playhouse is an all-purpose building for rehearsals, recitals, classes, theatrical productions and a variety of social and special events. An extensive addition and renovation in 2015 resulted in a larger stage area, dressing rooms, and an extended thrust stage.

The Cottage provides several classrooms, a dedicated rehearsal room for handbell choirs and an electronic keyboard lab.

The dining commons and meeting rooms are on the second floor of the William H. Scheide Student Center, named for benefactor William H. Scheide. Student mailboxes, lounge areas, student government offices, the Office of the Associate Dean of Students and Westminster Music and Books, the campus store, are located on its main level.

Erdman Hall, following an extensive renovation and rededication in 1997, is named for Charles Erdman, former chaplain of the college. It houses The Presser Music Center at Erdman Hall and provides offices and studios for the Voice and Piano Departments. It also holds the Voice Resource Center and an electronic keyboard lab.

Taylor Hall is named for Sophia Strong Taylor, who underwrote the purchase of the original Princeton acreage and the construction of the first four buildings. Faculty offices and private teaching studios occupy its four floors.

Seabrook, Dayton and Ithaca Halls currently serve as residence halls with basement-level practice rooms. Seabrook Hall is named for Charles F. Seabrook, a trustee and a long-term supporter of the college.

Dayton, Ithaca, and Princeton Halls are named for the three historic locations of the college. Dayton Hall houses Scheide Recital Hall. Dayton Hall is the location of the Casavant and Ott organs and of the organ department offices, teaching studios and practice facilities. Ithaca Hall includes both organ and piano practice facilities. Princeton Hall serves as the central location for Westminster Conservatory.

Westminster Choir College enjoys an excellent relationship with area institutions, and regularly makes use of facilities at the Princeton Ballet School, Princeton High School, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Princeton University. Performances are given in a variety of on- and off-campus venues, including schools and churches throughout the area.

## Westminster Choir College Library

The library at Westminster Choir College is housed in the Katharine Houk Talbott Library Learning Center. These collections comprise more than 67,000 music-related books, music scores and periodicals, approximately 5,400 choral music titles in performance quantities, a choral music reference collection of more than 80,000 titles, 200 current periodical titles in print, as well as access to more than 12,000 titles electronically. The library's 25,000 sound and video recordings are supplemented by more than 338,000 audio tracks available electronically from the Classical Music Library and the Naxos Music Library.

Special collections include the Erik Routley Collection of hymns and hymnological literature; the D. deWitt Wasson Research Collection of Organ Music; and the Archives of the Organ Historical Society, a comprehensive collection of organ research materials.

Talbott Library's score and sound recording collections cover all musical styles, genres and periods at a basic level, but are concentrated more heavily in the areas of choral, vocal, keyboard and sacred music. Of note are collected works of many individual composers, masterworks of music, an extensive piano pedagogy collection, instructional material for

music education in primary and intermediate schools and holdings both broad and deep in choral music, keyboard music and hymnals. The library collects multiple print editions of many music titles for comparison of editing practices and multiple recordings of many titles for comparison of performance practices.

For more information about Talbott Library, access [www.rider.edu/talbott](http://www.rider.edu/talbott) (<http://www.rider.edu/talbott>) on the Internet.

## Westminster Choir College Administration and Staff

Matthew Shaftel • Dean, Westminster College of the Arts  
 Christopher Botti • Interim Associate Dean of Students  
 Carol Conklin • Manager ITT and Finance, Westminster Conservatory  
 Marybeth Consiglio • Assistant Registrar  
 Ryan Dalton • Production Coordinator  
 Roberta Butler • Residence Life Area Director  
 Dax Finley • Manager, Creative Services  
 Lauren Gilmore • Assistant Director of Admissions  
 Scott Hoerl • Director of Westminster Conservatory and Continuing Education  
 Marjory J. Klein • Academic Coordinator  
 Marianne Lauffer • Assistant Director, Westminster Conservatory Faculty and Extensions  
 Joe Miller • Director of Choral Activities  
 James Moore • Director of Performance Management  
 Hester Null • Assistant Director, Westminster Conservatory  
 Marshall Onofrio • Associate Dean for Administration, Westminster College of the Arts  
 Natalie Pollard • Director of Alumni Relations  
 Kevin Radtke • Coordinator for Sacred Music and the Royal School of Church Music  
 Anne M. Sears • Director of External Affairs  
 Katherine M. Shields • Director of Admissions  
 Judy Simmons • Assistant to the Dean and Director  
 Evelyn J. Thomas • Director of Academic Support Services and Coordinator, Educational Opportunity Program  
 Laura Wilson • Assistant Director Box Office Manager  
 Kathryn Albe Wadley • Associate Director of Major Gifts

## National Association of Schools of Music Code of Ethics

As a fully-accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Music, Westminster Choir College abides by the NASM Code of Ethics, which establishes deadlines for the consideration and acceptance of talent-based scholarship awards from member institutions. Having accepted a financial aid offer from Westminster Choir College, undergraduate students must receive written permission from Westminster to consider an offer of financial aid from another institution after May 1. Having accepted a financial aid offer from Westminster Choir College, graduate students must receive written permission from Westminster to consider an offer of financial aid from another institution after April 15. Students accepted into Westminster Choir College after those dates must inform Westminster of any offer(s) they have accepted.

## Study Abroad

Study in a foreign country provides a unique opportunity for students to grow intellectually through exposure to the customs, habits, and languages of different cultures. Study abroad helps prepare students for the global community in which they will live and work, increasing

their employment and earnings potential. Study abroad experiences are available in many locations through Rider exchange and affiliate programs. Westminster semester-long programs offer courses in a variety of subjects, including voice and theory. An exchange program with the University for Music and Dramatic Arts in Graz, Austria, allows Westminster Choir College students to do voice, composition, and keyboard courses abroad. Besides our semester programs, students can select summer programs through study abroad providers and faculty-led short-term international travel projects that are offered for credit during January intercession, spring break, and in the summer.

Additional information is available on the Rider University Study Abroad Web site (<http://www.rider.edu/academics/academic-programs/study-abroad>). Information is also available in the Center for International Education, located in the office of the Associate Dean of Students in the Scheide Student Center.