

# KAREN COOKSEY

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## EDUCATION

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### **DMA in Choral Music, 2009**

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

Minors: Musicology, Orchestral Conducting, and Instrumental Music Education (with additional studies in voice and piano)

Dissertation: *Fauré's Requiem Re-examined: A Study of the Work's Genesis, Influences, and Influence*  
(Committee: Dr. Magen Solomon, chair; Dr. Nick Strimple; and Dr. Bruce Brown)

Honors: Choral Music Department Award (2009), Phi Kappa Phi and Pi Kappa Lambda

### **MM in Choral Conducting, 2002**

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Cognate: Music Theory (with additional studies in voice, piano, and violin)

### **BA *summa cum laude* in Music (highest honors) and Philosophy (honors), 2000**

Butler University, Indianapolis, IN

Honors thesis: *The Duruflé Requiem: A Guide for Interpretation*

Senior recitals in voice and piano; conducting study with all university choral, orchestra, and wind ensemble faculty conductors

Honors: Founders Scholar (full-tuition scholarship), Department of Music Faculty Distinction Award (two years), Prize for Excellence in Philosophy (two years), National Dean's List

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## WORK EXPERIENCE

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### **Assistant Professor**, beginning August 2014

Transylvania University, Lexington, KY

Direct the choral program, consisting of three choirs. Conduct the Transylvania Choir (auditioned mixed choir) and Pioneer Voices (non-auditioned men's choir). Prepare Choir to perform *Carmina Burana* with the Lexington Philharmonic in November. Teach music courses such as music appreciation and history.

### **Teacher/Tutor**, August 2006–present

Self-employed

Teach private lessons of both choral and orchestral conducting primarily to students preparing for their graduate school entrance examinations or professional musicians who have found their first conducting positions. Tutor choral music subjects such as sacred music, choral literature, and choral development to students preparing for their doctoral qualifying examinations.

**Interim Director of Music**, October 2013–April 2014

Westwood Presbyterian Church, Los Angeles, CA

Conducted the Chancel Choir (25-30 members). Coordinated with staff and volunteers to provide music at all Sunday morning services and holidays. Selected and/or arranged music as necessary. Directed special music programs including Messiah Sing Along and Christmas and Easter cantatas with union orchestras. Managed a music staff of seven section leaders and church organist.

**Associate Chorus Master**, July 2008–June 2013

Los Angeles Opera

Assisted Resident Conductor/Chorus Master Grant Gershon with preparation of the Chorus (varying in size from 16 to 86 union singers per production). Cover-conducted music and staging rehearsals. Led sectional rehearsals. Directed offstage vocal and instrumental ensembles. Served as First Assistant Conductor for the world premiere of Daniel Catán's *Il Postino*, featuring Plácido Domingo, in 2010; for *Madame Butterfly* in 2012; and *Traviata* in 2009. Assisted with Chorus and Orchestra preparation for the Music Center's collaboration with the Company and the Mark Morris Dance Group in performances of Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* in 2011. Assisted Chorus musical and staging preparation for Los Angeles Opera's first production of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, conducted by Musical Director James Conlon in 2009. Organized Chorus auditions and created offers and casting for each season.

**Director of Music**, November 2005–June 2008

Red Hill Lutheran Church, Tustin, CA

Conducted the Chancel Choir (22–30 members). Hired and managed three paid section leaders. Directed special music programs including chamber choirs and revived the handbell choir. Selected and/or arranged repertoire appropriate to services. Coordinated with pastoral staff and congregational volunteers to schedule and execute worship services and church-sponsored music programs including major choral-orchestral works: Mozart, *Coronation Mass*; Bach, Cantata 140 "Wachet auf"; Handel, *Messiah* (excerpts from Part I and "Hallelujah" Chorus); Fauré, *Requiem*; Vaughan Williams, *Five Mystical Songs*; and Robert Ray, *Gospel Mass*.

**Teaching Assistant [Director, Assistant Conductor, Lecturer]**, August 2005–May 2008

Choral Department, University of Southern California Thornton School of Music

**Director**, USC Thornton Oriana Choir, 2007–2008

Directed the Oriana Choir, a women's ensemble (50–56 members, non-auditioned) of music and non-music majors. Created detailed syllabus, and used the online course management tool Blackboard to apprise students of their progress throughout the semester. Developed performance schedule and programs in conjunction with the Choral Department and other community organizations (USC's Music at Noon series, Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church). Created student Steering Committee to aid with organization and social events. Programming highlights: Brahms, *Vier Gesänge*; Holst, *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda* (excerpts); Walker, *i thank You God*; and a Choral Improvisation created by the choir.

**Assistant Conductor**, USC Thornton Chamber Choir, 2006–2007

Assisted Dr. William Dehning in his final year of teaching and covered rehearsals as needed, including a choral-orchestral rehearsal for a performance of Verdi's *Requiem* with the USC Thornton Choral Artists (90 members, auditioned) and Symphony Orchestra and several rehearsals for a spring concert of music for double choir presented by the Chamber Choir (24 members, auditioned). Organized the year's schedule including Christmas "runout" fundraising events.

**Librarian**, Choral Department, 2006–2007

Coordinated library needs (acquisition, storage, and delivery) for the entire choral department and community ensembles. Managed three library assistants.

**Lecturer in Music**, Choral Conducting I, 2005–2006

Taught three sections of the introductory choral conducting class to undergraduate and graduate students. Developed syllabus with a focus on beginning gestural technique, exploration of select choral masterworks from different stylistic periods (e.g. Palestrina, *Sicut cervus*; Bach, *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* (chorale); Mozart, "Kyrie" and "Gloria" from the *Coronation Mass*; and Berger, *Harvester's Song*), and score study and analysis.

**Mentor**, May 2006–December 2007

Masters of Arts in Teaching Program, Music Education Department, University of Southern California

Observed and mentored choral music student teachers in the classroom. Honed students' lesson planning, classroom management, and conducting skills. Presented a workshop on choral techniques to the entire MAT program.

**Associate Director of Orchestras**, August 2004–January 2005

Carmel High School, Carmel, IN

Co-directed the Sinfonia (second-tier upper class ensemble, 60 members) and Philharmonic (mixed grade, 40 members) Orchestras. Occasionally worked with the rest of the departmental orchestras particularly the Concert Orchestra (first-tier freshman ensemble, 90 members). Taught string techniques, musicianship, and music appreciation/history within the class period as well as rehearsed for school performances. Served as Chorus Master for a performance of Holst's *Planets*.

**Director of Music**, July 2002–May 2005

Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis

Conducted the adult choir (24–30 members). Managed music staff and volunteers, and arranged for weekly special music. Artistically and administratively directed the *Heartland Choral Festival*, an annual event hosted by the church. The festival brought together 60–70 singers from midwestern Unitarian Universalist congregations and culminated in a multi-faceted worship service presentation (featuring Libby Larsen, *Missa Gaia: Mass for the Earth*; John Corigliano, *Fern Hill*; and Bach, Cantata 150 "Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich").

**Assistant Director**, September 2003–May 2005

Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Richmond, IN

Served as cover conductor and assisted with rehearsals and concerts for this professional city orchestra. Conducted the Orchestra-within-an-orchestra program giving area high school students the opportunity to perform alongside professional orchestra players (Rimsky-Korsakov, Introduction and Wedding March from *Le coq d'or*; and Borodin, Overture from *Prince Igor*). Adjudicated Young Artist Competition.

**Director of the Women's Chorus and Assistant Choral Director**, August 2002–May 2004

Earlham College, Richmond, IN

Directed the Women's Chorus (24–27 members, non-auditioned). Doubled the size of the Chorus due to strong recruiting efforts. Featured works exploring different cultures and time periods. Programming highlights: Hildegard, *O viridissima virga* (vv1–3, 8); Jansons, *Balts sniedzins snieg uz skujinam*; Davidson, *I never saw another butterfly* (excerpts); and Mathias *Salvator Mundi* (excerpts). Increased the Chorus's participation in the community. Doubled both the attendance and moneys raised for the annual Genesis of the YWCA Benefit Concert (a pops program featuring the Chorus and guests supporting a local sexual assault and domestic violence program). Added performances at Take Back the Night to the traditional schedule, and organized a collaborative mentoring retreat with the Indianapolis Women's Chorus that also helped to beta test software teaching Maori music and culture. Chorus Master for *ragazzi* in Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Richmond Symphony and excerpts from Humperdinck's *Hänsel and Gretel* with the Earlham College Orchestra. Assisted the Earlham College Choral Department including the Concert Choir (60–75 members, auditioned) and, in the 2002–2003 season, the Richmond Symphony Chorus (90 members, auditioned) in sectional and full rehearsals and in administration including the music library, stage management, and public relations. Coordinated the 2003 Earlham College Invitational High School Choral Festival with its performance of Duruflé's *Requiem* with the Richmond Symphony Orchestra and the 2004 Invitational Festival with guest ensemble Quink.

**Interim Music Director and Conductor**, January 2003–May 2003

Crossroads of America Youth Orchestra, Terre Haute, IN

Conducted the orchestra (40 members, grades 5–12, auditioned). Performed in local venues for the community selections such as: Rossini, *Italian Girl in Algiers* overture, Grieg, *In the hall of the mountain king*; and Dvorak, finale from Symphony No. 9. Developed musicianship skills throughout the rehearsal process. Created parent organization, and developed administrative infrastructure.

**Conductor**, Motet Choir, Spring and Fall semesters 2001, Spring semester 2002

Indiana University

Conducted the Motet Choir (35–70 undergraduate non-voice music majors, auditioned) in three recital concerts and one guest performance for the Charles Ives Festival (sharing the stage with guest conductor Gregg Smith and IU choral faculty Jan Harrington and Carmen Tellez). Participated in the university-wide audition process, and developed syllabi and rehearsal schedules. Taught basic vocal technique, musicianship and diction. Recruited and directed ad hoc student orchestras (35–40 members). Programming highlights: Bernstein, *Chichester Psalms*; Caplet, *Messe à trois voix*; Stravinsky, *Liturgical Motets*; and Berlioz, *Tristia*.

**Director of Music**, January 2001–May 2002

Southport Christian Church, Indianapolis, IN

Conducted the adult choir (15–20 members). Responsible for overseeing and developing the entire music program. Instituted new church-wide musical events including a worship service combining all three regular services for a blended Christmas service.

**Assistant Conductor**, September 1999–May 2000

Indianapolis Arts Chorale

Served as cover conductor. Led sectional rehearsals. Conducted on the regular concert season as well as a conducted a guest appearance at friendraising event.

**Choir Director**, August 1999–June 2000

Faith Missionary Church, Indianapolis, IN

Conducted the adult choir (20–25 members) weekly and the church orchestra (12–20 members) monthly. Active on the worship planning committee in developing thematic programs across the service. Utilized PowerPoint projections, narrations, and available music resources (handbell and children’s choirs and orchestra) to enhance the music ministry. Choral-instrumental work highlights: Mozart, *Ave verum corpus*; Pinkham, *Christmas Cantata*; and Handel, *Messiah* (excerpts from Part II). Culminated in an end-of-year concert sampling the breadth of sacred music entitled “Psalm 150.”

**Choir Director**, September 1998–June 1999

New Bethel Baptist Church, Wanamaker, IN

Conducted the adult choir (12–15 members) weekly in church services. Provided instruction in basic vocal technique and musicianship. Managed the budget and choral library.

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**AWARDS**

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**Quarterfinalist**, October 2009

Eric Ericson Award, Uppsala and Stockholm, Sweden

Selected as one of twelve conductors for this international choral competition in honor of conductor Eric Ericson.

**Second place**, September–October 2004

3<sup>rd</sup> International Competition for Young Choir Directors, Vienna, Austria

Selected as one of twenty-five conductors for this international conducting competition sponsored by Europa Cantat and Österreichischer Sängerbund. After three rounds of conducting university and professional Viennese choirs, awarded three prizes: *Best Interpretation of a Modern Work* (sponsored by the Arnold Schoenberg Choir), *Best Female Conductor* (sponsored by the Vienna State Opera Chorus) and *Second Place Overall*.

**Quarterfinalist**, October 2003

Eric Ericson Award, Uppsala and Stockholm, Sweden

**Finalist**, February 1999

Student Conducting Awards, undergraduate division, American Choral Directors Association National Conference, Chicago, IL

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**SELECTED PROJECTS**


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**[Conductor,** July 20–27, 2014

Oshman Family JCC Summer Community Music Workshop, Palo Alto, CA]

**[Adjudicator and Presenter,** July 29–August 4, 2014

China International Chorus Festival and International Federation of Choral Music World Youth Choral Education Conference, Beijing, China]

**[Lecturer,** Seminar: “Beautiful Bodies, Beautiful Music,” August 7 and 8, 2014

International Federation of Choral Music 10<sup>th</sup> World Choral Symposium, Seoul, South Korea]

**Presenter,** March 22 and 23, 2013

Butler University, Indianapolis, IN

Gave pre-concert talk for Department Chair Henry Leck’s retirement concert featuring Duruflé’s *Requiem*. Lectured about the work as well as answered questions about “life after Butler” during the final choir rehearsal.

**Chorus alto,** February 4, 2012

LA Philharmonic, Shrine Auditorium

Sang as a member of Los Angeles Master Chorale for performance of Mahler’s *Symphony No. 8* at the Shrine Auditorium as part of LA Phil’s Mahler Project.

**Clinician,** May 18, 2011

Unitarian Universalist Church Choir, Indianapolis, IN

Presented workshop on vocal technique and coached select repertoire.

**Substitute Chorus Master,** March 6, 2011

San Diego Opera

Conducted the men of the San Diego Opera Chorus in preparation for their upcoming run of Gounod’s *Faust*.

**Guest Conductor,** June 5, 2010

People Inside Electronics [PIE] concert series, Pasadena, CA

Conducted Morton Subotnick’s *The Key to Songs*, written for chamber ensemble and electronics, as the finale to PIE concert program “Vicious Circles and Deadly Elements.”

**Clinician,** May 16, 2010

Indianapolis Women’s Chorus, Indianapolis, IN

Directed workshop on vocal technique and rehearsed performance repertoire.

**Chorus Master,** April 2010

Intimate Opera Company, Pasadena, CA

Prepared the Chorus for a production of Puccini’s *Tosca* (performed in English).

**Compact disc [alto and liner notes contributor]:** “USC Thornton Chamber Choir in Taipei,” University of Southern California Flora Records, 2007.

**Clinician**, March 15, 2007

Rio Hondo College, Whittier, CA

Served as clinician for the Rio Hondo College Choral Festival, involving both a local high school and collegiate choir.

**Soundtrack [vocals]:** *Unrest*, score by Michael Cohen, After Dark Films/Asgaard Entertainment/Lionsgate, 2006.

**Compact disc [alto]:** “Universidad Navideña,” EMI Latin, 2006.

Sang in the chorus for USC in this Christmas compilation by American universities intended for Latino audiences as a member of the octet on the track “Noche Sagrada” [O Holy Night].

**Pianist:** Crumb, *A Haunted Landscape*, Earlham College Orchestra as part of the Earlham College Artist and Lecture Series, April 22, 2005.

Performed prepared piano with the Orchestra as part of the culminating concert resulting from a weeklong residency by George Crumb at the College.

**Compact disc [assistant conductor/alto]:** The Harmonies of Hoosier History, 2001.

Contributed as Assistant Conductor and member of the Alto section of Indianapolis Arts Chorale for this collection of music by Indiana composers.

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## RESEARCH

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**Review:** “*Requiem, Op. 48*,” Review of Gabriel Fauré’s “Requiem,” ed. by Marc Rigaudière. *Choral Journal* 55, no. 11 (June/July 2013): 65-66.

**Article [in progress]:** “The Fauré *Requiems*: The Evolution of Fauré’s *Requiem* and The Available Performing Materials”

**Poster:** “Fauré’s *Requiem* Re-examined: Complexity under a Simple Surface,” 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week (GPSAW) Research Fair and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) Poster Symposium, University of Southern California, March & April 2009.

**Research Assistant:** Nick Strimple, *Choral Music in the Nineteenth Century*, New York, Amadeus Press, 2008.

Compiled and edited index of names and reviewed proof for this choral literature survey text.

**Grant and report:** “The Duruflé *Requiem*: An Analysis,” Butler Summer Institute, Butler University, July 1999.

Wrote paper and provided presentation as the result of receiving a \$2,000 residential research grant awarded by the Butler Summer Institute.

**Conference Paper:** “Libby Larsen: How she composes and how it affects *How it thrills us*,” Butler Undergraduate Research Conference, Butler University, April 1999.

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**WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES**


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**Conducting Fellow**, February 2012

Carnegie Hall Weill Music Institute with the Young People's Chorus of New York City, NY, NY

Conducted the Young People's Chorus of New York City in performances of del Tredici's *Four Heartfelt Anthems* at the 92<sup>nd</sup> St Y and Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall. Worked with composer David del Tredici and conductors Francisco Nuñez, Phillip Brunelle, and Janet Galvan.

**Fellow**, June 2011

A Cappella Conducting Masterclass with Ragnar Bohlin, Chorus America National Conference, San Francisco, CA

**Auditor**, July–August 2004

Conductors Guild Workshop with Marin Alsop and Gustav Meier, Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Santa Cruz, CA

**Conducting Participant**, June–July 2003

Conducting Masterclass with Helmuth Rilling and Thomas Somerville, Oregon Bach Festival, Eugene, OR

**Conducting Participant**, July 2002

Conducting Institute with Nurhan Arman, Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto, Canada

**Conducting Participant**, July 2001

Conductors Institute with Harold Farberman and guest instructors, Apo Hsu and Leon Botstein, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY

**Conductor**, March 2000

“Superconductors” Workshop with Henry Leck, Rodney Eichenberger, and André Thomas, MENC: The National Association for Music Education National Conference, Washington, D.C.

**Conductor**, February 1998

Student Conductor Workshop with Michael Schwartzkopf, ACDA Central Conference, Detroit, MI

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**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND SERVICE**


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- American Choral Directors Association
  - **President**, Butler University ACDA Chapter, 1997–2000
- Chorus America
- College Music Society
- Conductors Guild
- International Federation of Choral Music
- National Association for Music Education
- National Collegiate Chorus Organization
- Performing Arts Medicine Association