

Marques J. Ruff, Ph.D.

Fine Arts Building, Rm. 134
2412 Quapaw Way Jonesboro, AR 72401
(870) 680-8082
mruff@astate.edu

Education

Florida State University

Ph.D. in Music Education, emphasis in Choral Conducting

Tallahassee, FL

August 2021–May 2024

- Dissertation title: “The River Still Runs Deep: A Conductor’s Guide to Selected Negro Spirituals Arranged for SATB Chorus by Harry T. Burleigh”
 - Advisor: Dr. Michael J. Hanawalt

University of Missouri

Master of Music in Choral Conducting

Master of Music in Vocal Performance

Columbia, MO

August 2017–May 2020

- Master’s Thesis: “From the French Grand Opera Stage to British Coronation Anthems: The Development of the British Coronation Anthem”
 - Advisor: Dr. Michael J. Budds

Central Connecticut State University

Bachelor of Arts Vocal Performance & Music Education

New Britain, CT

August 2004–August 2010

Work Experience

Arkansas State University

Assistant Professor of Vocal Music Education/Associate Director of Choral Activities

Jonesboro, AR

August 2024 -

- Co-lead and administer aspects of a comprehensive university choral program of undergraduate and graduate students, community members, including five curricular ensembles
- Conduct a 35-voice treble ensemble
- Conduct university gospel choir comprised of students and community members
- Advise undergraduate vocal music education majors
- Co-teach music teacher internship seminar
- Administer an operational budget, including choral scholarships

Courses Taught:

- MUED 2512 Introduction to K-12 Music Education Fall 2024
- MUED 4402 Methods and Materials for Choral Education Fall 2024
- MUED 2231 Vocal Techniques for Instrumentalists Fall 2024
- MUS 1630/1631/3630 Scarlet Voices Fall 2024
- MUS 3441 Elementary Conducting Spring 2025
- TIMU 4826 Music Teaching Internship in the Secondary School Spring 2025
- MUS 1630/1631/3630/3631/6630/6631 Scarlet Voices Spring 2025
- MUED 2512 Introduction to K-12 Music Education Fall 2025

- MUED 4402 Methods and Materials for Choral Education Fall 2025
- MUED 2231 Vocal Techniques for Instrumentalists Fall 2025
- MUS 1630/1631/3630 Scarlet Voices Fall 2025
- MUS 3370/3371 United Voices Gospel Choir Fall 2025

Current Courses:

- MUS 3441 Elementary Conducting Spring 2025
- TIMU 4826 Music Teaching Internship in the Secondary School Spring 2025
- MUS 1630/1631/3630/3631/6630/6631 Scarlet Voices Spring 2025
- MUS 3370/3371 United Voices Gospel Choir Spring 2025

Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University

Tallahassee, FL

Adjunct Voice Faculty

January 2024 - May 2024

- Teach weekly studio lessons at the intermediate and advanced levels to music majors, minors, and non-majors
- Participate in the assessment of vocal studio juries
- Serve on student capstone recital juries
- Coordinate bi-weekly studio voice class for music majors
- Coach repertoire for student competitions at the local, regional, and national level

Florida State University

Tallahassee, FL

Graduate Teaching Assistant

August 2021 - May 2024

- Director of the Florida State Gospel Choir
 - Present two concerts per academic year
 - Represent the College of Music in local and statewide performances
 - Plan multi-city tour for 46 person ensemble, including transportation, accommodations, and food
- Co-Director of the Vocal Jazz Ensemble
- Assistant Conductor of Collegians Glee Club
- Assistant Conductor of Chamber Chorus
- Assistant Course Instructor for Undergraduate Choral Conducting
 - Mentor undergraduate choral music education majors via weekly playbacks
 - Provide style and gestural advice to aid in developing aural image
- Plan Music Education events for pre-service teachers

Tennessee State University

Nashville, TN

Interim Director of Choral Activities

August 2020 - May 2021

- Conduct three curricular choirs (Meistersingers, University Choir, Commercial Music Ensemble)
- Teach a section of Music Appreciation for non-music majors
- Coordinate concert planning, choral retreats, and virtual school visits
- Engage in collaborative outreach and recruiting
- Create arrangements of musical works for various ensembles
- Manage the choral budget
- Advise music majors, including pre-service music teachers

University of Missouri

Columbia, MO

Graduate Teaching Assistant

August 2017 - July 2020

- Director of the Vocal Jazz Ensemble
- Assistant Conductor of University Singers (auditioned ensemble)
 - Plan multi-city tour for 60 person ensemble
 - Create daily travel itinerary

- Organize concerts, homestays, and hotel accommodations throughout tour
- Assistant Conductor of Choral Union (community symphonic chorus)
- Mentor undergraduate choral music education majors
- Teach applied voice to non-majors
- Teach vocal pedagogy to non-majors
- Provide vocal coaching for musical theater productions

Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia

Director of Music

- Coordinated with the Senior Pastor in the design of thematic worship experiences
- Conducted a 25 person sanctuary choir for weekly worship
- Created a Chamber Music series for the early morning worship service
- Managed the music budget and personnel, including staff musicians

Columbia, MO
August 2017 - July 2019

Chanticleer, Incorporated

Bass-Baritone, Chair of Education Committee

- Perform diverse repertoire including Gregorian Chant, Renaissance, Pop, Jazz, Gospel, and Contemporary works
- Tour across the globe, presenting approximately 120 concerts annually
- Develop curriculum for education program, including vocal and conducting masterclasses
- Conduct small group ensembles associated with the education program, and community engagement activities

San Francisco, CA
August 2013 - July 2017

Jumoke Academy at the Hartford Conservatory

Middle School Music Teacher

- Taught general music to 5th-8th grade including harmony, appreciation, history, and ensemble
- Conducted an all-school choir comprised of students and faculty
- Conducted Treble Choir (6th-8th grade)
- Conducted 5th Grade Music Ensemble
- Differentiated music curriculum to meet the needs of the individual student and the student body
- Developed and refined music curriculum based on National Core Arts Standards of creating, performing, and responding
- Established and maintained standards of student conduct to provide an orderly and productive environment
- Assessed students musical growth
- Communicated with parents/guardians, fellow faculty, and administrators on the growth of students in class

Hartford, CT
August 2011 - June 2013

Professional Musician Experience

Tallahassee Symphony, Tallahassee, FL., 2025

- G.F. Handel, *Messiah* - Bass soloist

Early Music City, Nashville, TN., 2025

- G.F. Handel, *Messiah* - Guest conductor

Apollo's Fire, Cleveland, OH., 2025

- Ensemble Member

Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Santa Fe, NM., 2025

-
- S. Okpebholo, *The American Road* - featured soloist for world premiere & recording (due summer 2026)
- Royal Scottish National Orchestra Chorus & American Choirs, Edinburgh, Scotland., 2025**
- A. Thomas, *Mass: A Celebration of Love and Joy* - soloist
- Conspirare Symphonic Choir, Austin, TX., 2025**
- F. Price, *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight* - Bass Soloist
- Rogue Valley Symphony, Ashland, OR., 2024**
- Gospel Christmas with Marques Jerrell Ruff, *featuring* The Florida State University Gospel Choir
- Choral Arts Alliance of Missouri, Columbia, MO., 2024**
- F. J. Haydn, *The Creation* - Bass Soloist
- Charlotte Master Chorale & Symphony, Charlotte, NC., 2024**
- F. Mendelssohn, *Elijah* - Elijah
- Tallahassee Community Chorus, Tallahassee, FL., 2024**
- F. J. Haydn, *The Lord Nelson Mass* - Bass soloist
- Charlotte Master Chorale & Symphony, Charlotte, NC., 2023**
- R. Nathaniel Dett, *The Ordering of Moses* - Bass Soloist
- Tallahassee Civic Chorus, Tallahassee, FL., 2023**
- Guest Conductor
- Tallahassee Community Chorus, Tallahassee, FL., 2023**
- F. Mendelssohn, *Elijah* - Bass Soloist
- New World Symphony Orchestra, Miami, FL., 2023**
- M. T. Thomas, *Song Cycle* - Baritone soloist
- Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, Tallahassee, FL., 2023**
- J. Thompson, *Walk in Dignity (World Premiere)* - Baritone soloist
 - Guest conductor
- Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Hartford, CT., 2023**
- M. Bonds, *Credo* - Baritone soloist
- Leon County Tenor/Bass Choir, Thomasville, FL., 2023**
- Guest Conductor
 - Choral Clinician
- Symphony San Jose, San Jose, CA., 2022**
- Bass Soloist
- Cantabile Youth Singers of Silicon Valley, Stanford, CA., 2022**
- Soloist
 - Choral Clinician
- National Chorus of Korea, Seoul, Korea., 2022**
- R. Vaughn Williams, *A Sea Symphony* - Baritone soloist
- Rogue Valley Symphony, Ashford, OR., 2022**
- A. Dworkin, *The American Rhapsody* - Narrator
- Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra, Urbana, IL., 2022**
- M. Tippett, *A Child of Our Time* - Bass Soloist
- Seraphic Fire, Miami, FL., 2022- present**
- Bass

-
- Soloist

Conspirare, Austin, TX., 2022- present

- Bass
- Soloist

Exigence, Detroit, MI., 2022 - present

- Bass
- Soloist

Tallahassee Community Chorus, Tallahassee, FL, 2021

- F. J. Haydn, *The Creation* - Bass Soloist

H. T. Burleigh Festival, Tennessee State University, 2021

- Guest Conductor

Florence Price Festival, Tennessee State University, 2020

- Guest Conductor

Parkway All-District Honor Choir, St. Louis, MO 2019

- Guest Conductor

Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Santa Fe, NM, 2019 - present

- Bass
- Soloist

Missouri Choral Artists, St. Louis, MO., 2018- present

- Bass
- Soloist
- Guest Conductor (2019-2020 season)
- Guest Conductor (2023-2024 season)
- Guest Conductor (2025-2026 season)

Conference Presentations

- Ruff, M. (2026, August). *Make A Joyful Noise: Building A Gospel Choir From Scratch*. International Federation of Choral Music World Symposium, Macau, China.
- Ruff, M. & Murphy, E. (2024, January). *Removing Me: Fostering Agency & Collaboration in The Rehearsal Space*. Florida Music Educators Professional Development Conference, Tampa, FL.
- Ruff, M. & Webb, D. (2023, January). *Make A Joyful Noise: Building A Gospel Choir From Scratch*. Florida Music Educators Professional Development Conference, Tampa, FL.
- Ruff, M. & Davis, M. N. (2022, July). *Only A Drop in the Bucket: A Numerical Analysis of Black Music Faculty at NASM-Accredited Institutions*. National Association of Negro Musics National Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.
- Ruff, M. (2018, June). *Winning the Audition: Life As A Professional Musician*. Missouri Music Educators Conference, Jefferson City, MO.

Guest Lectures/Clinics

- Ruff, M. (2026, January). Pre-Concert Lecture: Gospel!. Seraphic Fire, Miami, FL.
- Ruff, M. (2025, October). High School Honor Choir. Southern Oregon University, Ashland, OR.
- Ruff, M. (2025., October). All-Region Workshop. Jonesboro High School, Jonesboro, AR.
- Ruff, M. (2025, July). Pre-Concert Lecture: Roots & Rivers. Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Santa Fe, NM.

- Ruff, M. (2025, April). Choral Adjudicator. Celebration of Excellence Choral Festival, Houston, TX.
- Ruff, M. (2025, January). Choral Clinic. Liberal Arts and Science Academy, Austin, TX.
- Ruff, M. (2024, November). Choral Clinic. Aurora University, Aurora, IL.
- Ruff, M. (2024, November). Choral Clinic. Paragould High School, Paragould, AR.
- Ruff, M. (2024, October). All-Region Workshop. Jonesboro High School, Jonesboro, AR.
- Ruff, M. (2024, September). Choral Clinic. Riverview High School, Searcy, AR.
- Ruff, M. (2024, May). *Pentecost Sunday Gospel!* First Presbyterian Church of Hastings, Hastings, NE.
- Ruff, M. (2024, May). *Middle School Choral Clinic.* Sedgwick Middle School, West Hartford, CT.
- Ruff, M. (2023, October). *The Evolution of the Negro Spiritual.* Equal Justice Initiative, Santa Fe, NM.
- Ruff, M. (2023, March). *Move Out the Way: Agency & Collaboration in the Classroom & Rehearsal.* Westminster Choir College, Princeton, NJ.
- Ruff, M. (2022, December). *The Evolution of the Negro Spiritual.* Ohio University, Athens, OH.
- Ruff, M. (2022, August). *The Evolution of the Negro Spiritual.* Cantabile Youth Singers of Silicon Valley, Los Altos, CA.
- Ruff, M. (2022, March). *The Evolution of the Negro Spiritual.* Cantabile Youth Singers of Silicon Valley, Los Altos, CA.
- Ruff, M. (2022, February). *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within the Choral Arts.* Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.
- Ruff, M. (2021, July). *The Evolution of the Negro Spiritual.* Tennessee Governor's School, Murfreesboro, TN.
- Ruff, M. (2021, March). *The Evolution of the Negro Spiritual.* Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

University/Departmental Service

2024-2025 Academic Year

- Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, *Chair* (Department of Music)
- Learning Outcome Assessment Committee, *Chair* (Department of Music)
- Music Infrastructure Committee (Department of Music)
- Music Assessment Committee (Department of Music)
- Vocal Music Education Scholarship Committee, *Chair*
- Scholarship Committee (Department of Music)
- Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America, *Faculty Advisor*
- Curriculum Committee (University - College of Liberal Arts & Communication)
- Living Legends Gala Committee (University - Office of Access & Institutional Engagement)

2025-2026 Academic Year

- Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, *Chair* (Department of Music)
- Music Infrastructure Committee (Department of Music)
- Vocal Music Education Scholarship Committee, *Chair*
- Scholarship Committee (Department of Music)
- Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America, *Faculty Advisor*
- Curriculum Committee (University - College of Liberal Arts & Communication)
- Living Legends Gala Committee (University - Office of Access & Institutional Engagement)
- Black History Month Committee (University - Multicultural Center)

Affiliations/Memberships

-
- American Choral Directors Association
 - National Association for Music Education
 - National Association of Negro Musicians
 - American Association of Blacks in Higher Education
 - Society of Pi Kappa Lambda
 - Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America
 - Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated

References

Available upon request.