

**INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE BUILDING: The profound benefits of globally positioned study, exchange, and hosting-programs between conservatories**

*Presented by Richard Smith, USC Thornton School of Music, LA, California*

The USC Thornton School located in Los Angeles, California, has developed several programs that recognize the importance of international activity, they include:

Study abroad: courses that give students course credit for going abroad and working with faculty and students from host institutions.

Exchange: professors exchange positions at different institutions for as much as a semester, sharing materials and methods with students and faculty in both locations in the process.

Hosting experiences: hosting students from partner institutions from around the world and providing an immersive, creative, and collaborative experience.

These experiences have many positive outcomes for both students and faculty that include broadening academic worldview, encouraging musical and academic collaboration, adaptability, teambuilding, networking, cultural aspects of music making and communication, leadership, branding, marketing and fashion in music, problem solving, music industry, resume building and learning to work globally.

In the 3-week Thornton “Maymester” programs, USC Thornton students travel abroad as well as domestically at the end of their spring semester. These 3-4 week courses (currently to London, Paris and Nashville) allow students to explore and immerse themselves in the world around them.

The London Maymester, collaborates with 2 colleges in London. Thornton students form bands with the London School and write, arrange perform and record together. The 2022 London Maymester culminated in 15 original songs being recorded at the renowned Abbey Road Studios in North London. A fashion, branding, media and marketing intensive based around the bands also takes place. It is important to note that while this is mainly a pop and jazz-based offering, classical students are welcome to apply and contribute. I have been directing this program for over 10 years.

In our “Thornton **LA**Experience”, our partner schools from around the world travel to USC for a week of classroom visitations, concert attendance, collaboration, composition and masterclasses that culminate in a recording

AEC Pop and Jazz Platform 2023  
Open floor

session at the renowned East-West recording studios in Hollywood. This experience is sponsored by the Thornton school. The LAExperience is inclusive of classical as well as folk, jazz and popular music students.

The Thornton Maymester and “LAExperience” will be the focus of my presentation, though there are other international programs that Thornton is engaged in and can be part of the question-and-answer session.

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LAExperience <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2316357651968567/>