



Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca
Alta Formazione Artistica, Musicale e Coreutica
Conservatorio di Musica “Luca Marenzio” – Brescia

ANNEX A

Call for Applications – PhD Programme – 41st Cycle

Musical Heritage and Soundscapes: Sources, Spaces, Instruments, Pedagogical and Performative Practices

Description of the Training Project

The PhD Programme in *Musical Heritage and Soundscapes: Sources, Spaces, Instruments, Pedagogical and Performative Practices* arises from the need to respond to an epistemological and cultural urgency of our time: to understand and enhance the role that sound—in its manifold manifestations, whether musical, environmental, or performative—has played and continues to play in shaping cultures, territories, and communities.

In a society dominated by digital mediation, which filters, selects, and often marginalises the complexity of sonic heritage, it becomes essential to rethink musical and auditory memory through critical tools, embodied practices, and interdisciplinary strategies that restore to music its value as a historical and social agent.

At the core of this project lies a conception of performance as the midpoint between tangible and intangible heritage: both the result and the source of knowledge, a space for verification of sources and contexts, and a field of interaction between historical-critical research and sonic corporeality. In this perspective, performance is understood as embodied research practice, a situated epistemological space, and a transformative agent.

The PhD aims to train researchers capable of integrating theoretical reflection and artistic practice, in a continuous dialogue among theory, documentation, action, and transmission.

The project is part of the development strategies of the third cycle of Higher Artistic, Musical and Coreutic Education (AFAM), serving as an experimental laboratory open to intersectoral collaboration with universities, research centres, archives, museums, libraries, collections, and cultural institutions, both Italian and international.

The Doctoral Board, composed of distinguished scholars and professionals from different disciplinary fields (music, musicology, the humanities, sound studies, architecture, museology, and digital technologies), reflects the markedly transdisciplinary nature of the programme, conceived as a place of convergence for knowledge and practices in constant negotiation.

The PhD develops a thematic and methodological framework based on a complex network of interconnected axes: musical sources (written and oral), instruments and construction techniques, architectures and performance spaces, soundscapes, pedagogical practices, documentation and restitution technologies. The sonic element is thus recognised as a formative force that shapes matter, generates space, moulds collective memory, and activates dynamics of cultural transmission and transformation.



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The main research areas include the reconstruction and re-creation of historical performance contexts, sound mapping of territories, situated pedagogical practices, investigation of the relationships between sound, architecture, and environment, and the documentation and promotion of neglected sonic heritages—such as acoustic minorities, ephemeral repertoires, and marginal oralities.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, the PhD promotes the enhancement of cultural heritage (Goal 11), the building of inclusive and dialogical communities (Goals 5 and 16), the strengthening of culture's social role (Goal 12), and the creation of effective partnerships between research entities and territorial institutions (Goal 17). Music and sound thereby become tools for active citizenship, critical awareness, and participation.

The doctoral pathway is grounded in a strong connection with the local territory, in the awareness that artistic knowledge, to be truly generative, must be rooted in real contexts and directed towards shared dissemination. Through the activation of AFAM networks, Erasmus+ collaborations, and partnerships with European conservatoires and foreign universities, the project builds a training and research infrastructure oriented towards innovation, social responsibility, and the production of shared knowledge.

Course Objectives

The PhD Programme in *Musical Heritage and Soundscapes* aims to train a new generation of performer-researchers capable of critically questioning their own artistic practice, situating it within a broad and transdisciplinary theoretical framework, and communicating it with cultural, historical, and social awareness.

The goal is to shape highly qualified figures capable of operating in artistic research, higher education, cultural design, and the mediation of sonic heritage, combining theoretical dimension, methodological rigor, and creative sensibility.

A fundamental component of the programme is the dynamic and balanced integration between artistic research and historical-critical research. The PhD encourages a constant interaction between theory and practice, in which performance is not only the outcome of reflection but also its epistemological engine.

Doctoral candidates shall be guided to conceive and document performance as a space of embodied knowledge, a tool for questioning sources, and a means for modelling and re-signifying sonic contexts. In this view, performative and compositional practices become both instruments and objects of research.

Expected competencies include: advanced mastery of vocal and/or instrumental practices; critical and interdisciplinary reading of sources; ability in historical and exegetical analysis and interpretation; design of cultural and artistic interventions at local and international levels; and conscious use of digital technologies for the documentation, processing, and transmission of musical and sonic heritage.



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The performer's body is regarded as a cognitive instrument and living archive; therefore, the development of embodied and situated practices centred on listening, movement, space-sound interaction, improvisation, and critical reflection on artistic action will be central.

Preferred methodologies include research-creation, performance-informed research, sound and landscape ethnography, digital musicology, sound mapping, critical performance analysis, music philology, and advanced and comparative music pedagogy.

The approach shall be strongly transdisciplinary, fostering the development of mixed methods able to connect humanistic, artistic, technological, and scientific knowledge. Awareness of the ethical, political, and social implications of artistic research shall also be promoted.

Within the research environment, access to sound and iconographic archives, instrumental collections, music libraries, research laboratories, and digital platforms will be encouraged. Collaborations with universities, conservatoires, international research centres, museums, foundations, and cultural institutions will form a strategic network for internationalisation and for the active involvement of doctoral candidates in advanced cultural production contexts.

In particular, mobility abroad, participation in Erasmus+ projects, academic alliances, and interactive platforms for the shared documentation of sonic heritage shall be promoted.

Expected learning outcomes include the ability to operate within highly interdisciplinary contexts, to design complex cultural experiences, and to produce artistically grounded and socially relevant knowledge.

Doctoral candidates will be able to design innovative educational paths, contribute to the digitisation and promotion of musical heritage, and promote inclusive and sustainable cultural policies, in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The graduate profile shall be that of a professional aware of the transformative function of musical art, capable of activating networks of dialogue between research, artistic production, education, and social engagement.

The PhD programme will thus contribute to the development of a critical and creative mindset able to impact reality and guide the future of musical and sonic culture.

Organisation of the Programme

The PhD programme, administratively based at the Conservatoire, is newly established, features a single curriculum, and offers two scholarships and one position without scholarship, subject to any subsequent co-financing that may increase the number of funded scholarships.

The duration of the programme is three years, commencing on 1 January 2026, and culminating in the awarding of the title of Doctor of Research (PhD) by the Conservatoire of Brescia.

The submission of the research project for the application, the oral examination, the drafting of the thesis, and the final discussion shall all be conducted in Italian.



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The educational activities, whose attendance by the doctoral candidates is compulsory, either in person or remotely (if authorised by the Doctoral Board), shall take place at the Conservatoire and are organised as follows:

- Common training activities, designed to provide doctoral candidates with skills relating to the techniques and methods of artistic, scientific, and technological research, as well as the fundamental knowledge necessary for achieving the educational objectives of the programme;
- Specific training activities, designed to provide and/or supplement the knowledge and skills of doctoral candidates;
- External training activities, chosen by the doctoral candidate with the approval of the Doctoral Board, which shall verify their coherence with the educational path and/or the doctoral research project.

Indicatively, the number of hours for each type of activity over the three years, for a total of approximately 96 hours, is distributed as follows:

- Disciplinary/Interdisciplinary Training: 60 hours
- Language Training: 12 hours
- Information Technology Training: 12 hours
- Research Project Management: 12 hours

Additional Educational Activities

Over the three-year period, further educational activities are also organised (seminars, laboratory and research activities, and interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary training), according to the following programme:

1. Seminars

The seminars shall consist of sessions dedicated to deepening the multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary training of doctoral candidates, with reference to fields such as sound physics and movement physiology, aesthetics, economics and law of visual and performing arts, organisation of the performing arts, and semiotics of the arts.

2. Laboratory Activities

The laboratory activities shall focus both on the analysis and presentation of the doctoral candidates' research work through its different stages of progress and on the study and realisation of artistic activities consistent with the artistic-scientific objectives of the PhD programme.

3. Dissemination and Valorisation of Results, Intellectual Property, and Open Access

The activities concerning the dissemination and valorisation of results shall include a series of public events and meetings, also to be held in the theatre and concert halls affiliated with the programme.



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Sessions dedicated to the study of issues relating to intellectual property, with the assistance of sector experts, shall also be organised.

4. Research Management and Knowledge of European and International Research Systems

These activities shall focus on exploring spaces and frameworks of artistic and scientific research in Europe and beyond, with particular reference to programmes specifically addressing the relationship between artistic-scientific investigation and its impact on artistic production.

5. Language Development

These activities shall consist of exercises aimed at improving the doctoral candidates' spoken and written proficiency in English and French, and—where required by the thesis topic—in other major European languages (German, Spanish).

A central theme of these sessions shall be the analysis of specialised vocabulary in the field of performing arts.

6. IT Development

These activities shall consist of exercises aimed at improving digital and IT skills, with particular regard to the use of software for audiovisual editing, database construction, and musical notation and typesetting.

7. Fundamental Principles of Ethics, Gender Equality, and Integrity

These activities shall consist of applied exercises in different educational and productive contexts, within the field of research in the performing arts, with special attention to the goals of inclusion, ethical principles, and gender equality.

Admission Procedure

Evaluation of Qualifications:

The evaluation shall take into account the curriculum vitae and all documents submitted by the candidates, as well as the research project, written in Italian, consistent with the disciplinary areas and objectives of the PhD programme.

Candidates are required to indicate in the abstract of their second-level diploma or master's thesis both the title of the thesis and the name of the supervisor (with an Italian translation if not written in one of the main EU languages).

Oral Examination:

The oral examination shall consist of the presentation of the candidate's CV and research project, followed by the reading and extemporaneous translation of a passage from a scientific text in English (and, where required by the topic of the research project, in another EU language: French, Spanish, or German).



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Submission of Applications

Candidates must send their application via certified electronic mail (PEC) (pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 1 of the Call for Applications) following the procedure below:

Mandatory fields in the Application Form (Annex B):

- Personal and fiscal data
- Curriculum studiorum
- Date and grade of First-Level Academic Diploma / Bachelor's Degree (for foreign qualifications, the grading system used must be specified)
- Date and grade of Second-Level Academic Diploma / Master's Degree or equivalent qualification
- List of examinations taken during the second-level programme with corresponding grades (for foreign qualifications, the grading system must be specified)
- Signed Privacy Statement (Annex C)

Optional fields:

- Chronological list of scholarships or similar awards received
- Diplomas or certificates of participation in post-diploma AFAM/university courses
- List (preferably supported by certificates) of participation in research groups or artistic productions
- List (preferably supported by certificates) of participation in stages or workshops
- Other recognitions (e.g. prizes, second degree or diploma)

Additional documentation to be attached to the application:

- Letter of recommendation from a lecturer, signed and dated after the publication of this call (mandatory)
- Abstract of the second-level diploma thesis, including the name of the supervisor (mandatory), or presentation of the concert programme performed as part of a thesis for instrumental courses or similar (mandatory)
- Research project (maximum 11,000 characters) (mandatory)
- List of publications and/or artistic productions (optional)
- Certificates of participation in courses, stages, etc. (optional)
- Copy of a valid identity document (mandatory)

Language Competence Required



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Candidates must demonstrate proficiency in the English language.

Career and Professional Opportunities

The PhD programme is designed to train researchers and professionals with a highly flexible and innovative profile, capable of working effectively within academic contexts, AFAM institutions, public and private entities active in artistic, musical, cultural, and museum production, as well as in fields relating to heritage mediation and sound design.

The training combines performative practice, historical-critical research, and advanced technological applications, ensuring broad professional applicability across various domains of contemporary culture.

In addition to artistic and performative careers, the PhD opens concrete opportunities in academic and AFAM research and teaching, and provides a strong foundation for teaching musical, choreutic, and performative disciplines at secondary school level, according to the relevant teaching categories.

Graduates will be able to operate in highly complex cultural and professional environments, where pedagogical, design, sociological, technological, and multimedia dimensions intersect.

The programme also prepares professionals capable of actively contributing to territorial transformation processes, participating in cultural citizenship, heritage education, and sustainable development initiatives.

Its open and experimental structure encourages the exploration of new fields of application for research, including those linked to the evolution of the third mission and to the emerging directions of doctoral education increasingly oriented toward the social restitution of knowledge.

In this sense, performance, conceived as a cognitive and relational device, serves as a privileged tool to foster connections with contexts outside academia, enhancing sonic heritage in a creative, participatory, and inclusive manner.