

Prof. Dr. Christoph Hönerlage

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2672-6972>

Hochschule für katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikpädagogik (HfKM) Regensburg/
University for Catholic Church Music and Music Education Regensburg (Germany)

**Church music degree programmes
at the University of Catholic Church Music
and Music Education (HfKM)
Regensburg (Germany).
The history of an unusual university**

The Kirchenmusikschule Regensburg (Regensburg School of Church Music) was founded on 22 November 1874 by Franz Xaver Haberl on the advice of Franz Liszt. Today it is the oldest existing Catholic institution for church music of its kind in the world. From the very beginning, it has had international significance beyond the German-speaking world.

On 11 February 1962, by decree of the Congregation for Studies, the Regensburg Church Music School was permanently affiliated to the Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra in Rome.

The Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture transformed the Church Music School into the Academy for Catholic Church Music and Music Education with retroactive effect from 1 January 1973. Cooperation agreements from 1989 and 1999 with the University of Music and Theatre in Munich made it possible to take diploma examinations.

On 22 November 2001, the Hochschule für katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikpädagogik (HfKM) –Regensburg University of Catholic Church Music and Music Education – was established under the auspices of the Regensburg Church Music School Foundation.

The implementation of the European study reform (Bachelor's/Master's) on 22 November 2008 strengthened the university's profile in church music and music education.

In September 2018, all 30 Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes were successfully accredited by the two agencies ACQUIN e.V. (Bayreuth) and AKAST e.V. (Eichstätt-Ingolstadt)¹.

1. Portrait

The *University of Catholic Church Music and Music Education* (HfKM) is one of the world's leading educational institutions for church music. Its 190 students currently come from 12 countries around the world.

The HfKM has always focussed on both the artistic and pedagogical orientation of its training, in which church music students are also prepared for their liturgical and pastoral co-responsibility in the changing structures of deaneries and parishes. Given the outstanding importance of the liturgy for the life of the church, the need to train church musicians and music teachers who are prepared for their profession not only artistically and pedagogically, but also in their entire lives, is obvious. The close connection between study and life at the HfKM in Regensburg offers the best conditions for this, in addition to the training opportunities at the large state universities.

When the HfKM was founded, the standards that also apply to other universities of music were followed. In terms of competitiveness, the aim was to achieve equivalence (not similarity). In addition to the relevant state legal regulations, the main criteria are first and foremost the requirements specified in the implementation regulations for the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* and the requirements of the Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture, Science and the Arts, which must be observed for state recognition. The structure of the HfKM and its relationship to the ecclesiastical sponsor are laid down in the basic regulations and in the study and examination regulations, which also follow the guidelines of the Apostolic Constitution. The Magnus Cancellarius of the HfKM is Diocesan Bishop Prof Dr Rudolf Voderholzer².

Internationally renowned graduates since the founding of the Regensburg Church Music School in 1874³:

- Karl Gustav Fellerer (1902–1984), German musicologist, professor in Freiburg/Switzerland
- Max Filke (1855–1911), Silesian composer, cathedral conductor in Breslau

¹ According to: <https://www.hfkm-regensburg.de/hochschule/geschichte/> (14.10.2023).

² *HfKM-Portrait*, <https://www.hfkm-regensburg.de/hochschule/portrait/>; *Stiftung Kirchenmusikschule*, <https://www.hfkm-regensburg.de/hochschule/organe/> (14.10.2023).

³ I owe this research to my colleague, Dr Dieter Haberl.

- Józef Kromolicki (1882–1961), German-Polish composer, conductor at St Michael's in Berlin
- Ignaz Mitterer (1850–1924), Austrian composer, cathedral conductor in Brixen
- Juozas Naujalis (1869–1934), Lithuanian composer, organist at Kaunas Cathedral
- Lorenzo Perosi (1872–1956), Italian composer, conductor of the Cappella Sistina
- Theodor Bernhard Rehmann (1895–1963), German composer, cathedral conductor in Aachen
- Josef Renner jun. (1868–1934), German composer, cathedral organist in Regensburg
- Józef Surzyński (1851–1919), Polish composer, conductor of the Poznan Cathedral Choir
- Ernst von Werra (1854–1913), Swiss organist, hymnologist, director of the Beuron church music school.

2. The study programmes Church Music (BA and MA), Gregorian Chant/Liturgical Chant (MA) and New Sacred Music (MA)⁴

The HfKM Regensburg offers the following study programmes in the field of church music: Church Music (BA), Church Music (MA), Gregorian Chant/Liturgical Chant (MA) and New Sacred Music (MA).

A characteristic feature of church music studies at the HfKM is that they cover all areas of church music, in particular Gregorian chant/liturgical chant, choir and schola conducting, liturgical organ playing/improvisation, organ literature playing. Individual specialisations are possible.

This has been the basic concept of the Regensburg Church Music School since its foundation. Church musicians are thus trained in a comprehensive sense, receiving excellent training in all relevant areas in order to be comprehensively prepared for the diverse tasks of a church musician in liturgy and pastoral work. At present, it is becoming increasingly clear that the profession of church musician encompasses and characterises all three “pillars” of church life: liturgia, diakonia and martyria, and that it therefore often has a key position in church life.

As a rule, a full-time church musician in Germany is also a cultural organiser at local (political) level (e.g. by performing concerts).

⁴ Information on the BA and MA programmes in Church Music, Gregorian Chant/Liturgical Chant and New Sacred Music has been taken from the HfKM homepage: <https://www.hfkm-regensburg.de/>

It should be mentioned that there are full-time positions for church musicians (BA and MA) in German dioceses and thus the profession of “church musician”. These full-time church musicians can be employed at the parish level as well as at the level of the deaneries (deanery musicians) or larger regions (regional or district cantors) of the diocese. Depending on the scope of duties and responsibilities, a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree is required for such full-time positions. In addition to full-time positions (100% weekly working hours), there are also part-time positions.

The BA programme in Church Music

Artistic training

Aims of the programme

The degree programme in Catholic Church Music at the HfKM Regensburg qualifies students to perform church music tasks in liturgy, concerts and performances, in church educational and general cultural work, for tasks related to music pedagogy, in particular for the training and further education of part-time church musicians, for advising church committees on specialist issues and for representation in public.

Degree

Successful completion of all module examinations in accordance with § 4 Para. 2 in the Catholic Church Music degree programme leads to a professionally qualifying degree. On the basis of these examinations, the university awards the academic degree Bachelor of Music (B.Mus.) in accordance with state law. By authority of the Holy See (cfr. Decree of the Congregation for Catholic Education, 22 November 2016, Prot.Nr. 829/2000/D), the academic degree Baccalaureatus in Musica Sacra is awarded in accordance with ecclesiastical law.

Duration

The standard period of study for the Catholic Church Music degree programme is 8 semesters.

The MA programme in Church Music

Artistic training

Aims of the programme

The MA programme in Catholic Church Music at the HfKM Regensburg qualifies students for the exemplary performance of church music tasks in liturgy, concerts and performances, in church educational and general cultural work, for the training and further education of part-time and full-time church musicians, for advising church committees on specialist issues and for representation in public. It prepares students for work in prominent positions in a diocese and for teaching at church music training centres.

Graduation

Successful completion of all module examinations in accordance with § 4 Para. 2 in the Catholic Church Music degree programme leads to a professionally qualifying degree. On the basis of these examinations, the university awards the academic degree Master of Music (M.Mus.) in accordance with state law. By authority of the Holy See (cfr. Decree of the Congregation for Catholic Education, 22 November 2016, Prot.Nr. 829/2000/D), the academic degree *Licentiatus in Musica Sacra* is awarded in accordance with ecclesiastical law. Graduates of the degree programme can choose to use either the state or ecclesiastical academic degree.

Duration

The standard period of study for the MA programme in Catholic Church Music is 4 semesters.

The MA programme Gregorian Chant/Liturgical Chant (Master of Music)

Artistic training

Aims of the programme

The degree programme at the HfKM Regensburg qualifies students on the Gregorian Chant/Liturgical Chant course for outstanding church music tasks in liturgy, concerts and performances, in supra-regional (dioceses, regions, deaneries) church educational and general cultural work, for the training and further

education of part-time and full-time church musicians, for advising church committees on specialist issues and for representation in public. It prepares students for positions with a focus on Gregorian chant/liturgical chant and for teaching this subject at universities and other musical and pastoral theological training centres.

Degree

Successful completion of all module examinations in accordance with § 4 Para. 2 in the Gregorian Chant/Liturgical Chant degree programme leads to a professionally qualifying degree. On the basis of these examinations, the university awards the academic degree Master of Music (M.Mus.).

Duration

The standard period of study for the MA Gregorian Chant programme is 4 semesters.

The MA programme in New Sacred Music (NGM)

Artistic training

Aims of the programme

The degree programme at the HfKM Regensburg qualifies students on the MA course in New Sacred Music for outstanding church music tasks in liturgy, concerts and performances, in supra-regional (dioceses, regions, deaneries) church educational and general cultural work, for the training and further education of part-time and full-time church musicians, for advising church committees on specialist issues and for representation in public. It prepares students for work in prominent positions in a diocese and for teaching at church music training centres in the field of new sacred music.

Graduation

Successful completion of all module examinations in accordance with § 4 Para. 2 in the New Sacred Music degree programme leads to a professionally qualifying degree. On the basis of these examinations, the university awards the academic degree Master of Music (M.Mus.).

Duration

The standard period of study for the MA programme in New Sacred Music is 4 semesters.

Library

In addition to the well-equipped university library, there are other excellent libraries in the city of Regensburg that can be used by HfKM students. In addition to the University Library and the *Staatliche Bibliothek* (State Library), the *Bischöfliche Zentralbibliothek* (Episcopal Central Library) deserves special mention, whose holdings also include the famous *Proske Library*, which offers a wealth of research material for academic work.

Weekly church service as an essential part of the church music programme

An essential part of church music studies at the HfKM Regensburg is the weekly church service, which is celebrated in the study church of St Andrew. This regularity and the anchoring of the service in the curriculum characterises the HfKM – as far as can be seen—above all other church music training institutions in the German-speaking world.

Various forms of worship are celebrated. In addition to the Holy Mass, this includes in particular Vespers, but also the Liturgy of the Word, vigils and popular forms, such as the May Devotion (Mai-Andacht), as well as freer forms of worship.

Under the direction of the professor of Gregorian chant/liturgical chant, students take on the musical conception of these services and also the liturgical services, in particular the musical services: cantor, organist, direction of the schola and choir, singing in the choir and schola.

In this way, the entire period of study is accompanied and characterised by liturgical practice. Students are able to gain a wide range of experiences that shape them and prepare them for their future tasks as church musicians. Feedback from former students who are now working full-time as church musicians confirms that they find this worship practice from their time as students very valuable for themselves and for their work.

3. Perspectives

This encourages the HfKM to maintain liturgical practice as an essential part of the course and to continue to optimise it, especially in view of the changing circumstances in the church and society.

It has already been emphasised above that the profession of church musician encompasses and shapes all three “pillars” of church life: *liturgia*, *diakonia* and *martyria*, and that it therefore often has a key position in church life—and beyond that: in social life.

This is a great opportunity for church music and church musicians. To seize this opportunity, the HfKM cultivates the entire spectrum of church music—from Gregorian chant to new sacred music—both in its curriculum and in its liturgical practice. It strives for the highest artistic quality as a prerequisite for church music to unfold its power in *liturgia*, *diakonia* and *martyria* for the glorification of God and in service to people and to send out new impulses for life in the church and the world.

The close connection between the two specialised groups at the HfKM also contributes to this to a considerable extent: Church music and music education fertilise and inspire each other. Students and teachers from both departments meet and contribute their skills both in church services and outside the liturgy (e.g. in concerts).

Abstract

Church music degree programmes at the University of Catholic Church Music and Music Education (HfKM) Regensburg (Germany). The history of an unusual university

The Regensburg University of Catholic Church Music and Music Education (HfKM), founded in 1874 as the Regensburg School of Church Music by Franz Xaver Haberl, is the world’s oldest Catholic institution for church music. With international significance from its inception, the institution was officially affiliated with the Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra in Rome in 1962. In 1973, it was transformed into an academy and, in 2001, the HfKM was formally established. The university offers Bachelor’s and Master’s programs in Church Music, Gregorian Chant, and New Sacred Music, emphasizing both artistic and pedagogical training. The curriculum prepares students not only for liturgical and pastoral responsibilities but also for broader cultural roles. Students gain expertise in areas such as Gregorian chant, choir conducting, and organ performance. HfKM maintains close ties with the church, combining artistic training with liturgical practice. This comprehensive

education equips students for significant roles in both church and society, ensuring church music's contribution to religious and cultural life.

Keywords: University of Catholic Church Music and Music Education (HfKM) Regensburg, BA programme Church Music, MA programme Church Music, MA programme Gregorian Chant/Liturgical Chant (Master of Music), MA programme New Sacred Music (NGM)

References

HfKM-Portrait, <https://www.hfkm-regensburg.de/hochschule/portrait/>
Stiftung Kirchenmusikschule, <https://www.hfkm-regensburg.de/hochschule/organe/>
 (14.10.2023) Dr phil.

Christoph Hönerlage, Dipl.-Theol., Dipl.-Musiklehrer, Kirchenmusiker (A-Examen) is Professor of Gregorian Chant/Liturgical Chant at the Hochschule für katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikpädagogik (HfKM) Regensburg (University for Catholic Church Music and Music Education). There he directs the Schola and represents the department in the Bachelor's and Master's programmes in Church Music. Since 2019, he has also been responsible for the newly established Master's degree programme in Gregorian Chant/Liturgical Chant (Master of Music).

Christoph Hönerlage is an elected member of both the board of the German-speaking section of the International Association for the Study of Gregorian Chant (AISCGre) and its international board (Consiglio Direttivo) and is a member of the AISCGre's "Melodie-Restitution" working group.

He is the founder and director of the Frauenschola Exsulta Sion and the Schola Gregoriana Ratisbonensis, which is dedicated to the Franconian-Carolingian core repertoire of Gregorian chant as well as the rich treasure of monophonic liturgical chants of the former Regensburg Benedictine Abbey of St Emmeram.

Christoph Hönerlage is internationally active as a speaker and lecturer at choral courses, participates in CD productions and publishes in the field of Gregorian chant/liturgical chant.