

Deborah Annette Simmons, Ed.D.

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Native of Greensboro, North Carolina, spending the last 20 plus years in the New England area. Received a bachelor's degree, Winston-Salem State University, NC); Master of Arts, Master of Education and Doctor of Education, respectively, in music therapy/special education, guitar instruction and adult learning, Teachers College Columbia University, NY.

Additional studies: Summer institute on African Studies, Yale University, CT. (1988) and two week "Jazz in July" Institute, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA. (1998). While at UMass, she studied with jazz pianist, Billy Taylor & jazz guitarist, Ted Dunbar-mentee of Wes Montgomery and Horace Clarence Boyer.

Currently Professor of Music/Program Coordinator, Associate of Arts in Music Studies, CT State Community College- Manchester, a member in good standing with the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM.)

Volunteer, Mystic Seaport, 2016-present.

- Worked on the restoration of the Mayflower
- Worked on the Amistad Replica
- Worked on the Charles W. Morgan
- Annual Wooden Boat Show Sponsored by the Wooden Boat Magazine
- Displayed my wooden boat, *Mende Liberte*, constructed 2015-2016. Special Recognition Awarded by the Wooden Boat Magazine in Summer 2023. The boat has wood gifted from the country of Sierra Leone, in the construction of the Amistad Replica, New Haven, CT.
- *Mende Liberte* featured in the book, *In a Class All Their Own: Unique and Historic Boats of New England* by Tom Verde.

Courses Developed:

Today's Music- a comprehensive review of American Root music forms (i.e., Anglo-Celtic, African, Latin and Native) diverse traditions, protest music, country, blues and rock.

Today's Music II: Gospel, Ragtime, Blues and Jazz- a comprehensive review of the impact of African American and Latin roots music forms on jazz and gospel music development.

- October 2024, DEI conference, Southern Connecticut State University. Presentation: *Protest Music in America*

- April 2024 Global Majority Retreat, Southern Connecticut State University, CT., Presentation- *Protest Music in America*
- 2018-2019- Sabbatical- Topic: *The role of men of color in the development of America's maritime traditions including their contributions to songs of the sea.*
- 2011-present. Solo voice/guitar performing a variety of contemporary styles. Musical influences: pop, rhythm and blues and classical.
- 1997-2009- Gospel Choir Director and Accompanist, St. Monica's Episcopal Church, Hartford, CT
- 1996 to 2003 Keyboardist/acoustic bass player, *Swivel Hips*, contemporary group fusing funk, jazz, Latin, R&B, pop and rock. Performing throughout the New England area. Noted performances:
 - June 2001 – Sunken Garden Poetry Festival, Farmington, CT with simulcast on National Public Radio (NPR).
 - June 2001 & 2003- International Festival of Arts & Ideas, New Haven, CT
 - July 2000 – Millennium March on Washington, Washington, D.C. (Performed to over 10,000 people)
 - July 2001 – Opened for the Neville Brothers, Toads Place, New Haven, CT

When Dr. Simmons is not engaged in music and history, supporting the ministry of Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford, CT., visual art, woodworking, she is biking along the Connecticut River and feeding the birds.