

Programme Specification

MA Music Composition

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| <i>School:</i> | Arts |
| <i>Subject area:</i> | Music |
| <i>Entry from academic year:</i> | 2022-23 |
| <i>in the month(s) of:</i> | September |
| <i>Awarding institution:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Teaching institution:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Delivery location:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Programme/s accredited by:</i> | Not applicable |
| <i>Exit awards:</i> | Postgraduate Certificate Music Composition |
| <i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i> | Not applicable |
| <i>Joint Honours combinations:</i> | Not applicable |
| <i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i> | Not applicable |
| <i>Mode/s of study:</i> | Postgraduate periods of study ¹ for full time / part time |
| <i>Language of study:</i> | English |
| <i>Paired with foundation year</i> | No |
| <i>Study abroad opportunities:</i> | No |
| <i>Placement year opportunity:</i> | No |

Introduction and special features

The MA Music Composition programme offers you the opportunity to investigate the interrelationships between their own arts practice and questions arising about knowledge, research, practice and dissemination. The MA provides you with compositional, reflective and research strategies through which to develop their portfolio as thinking practitioners. This is an opportunity to compose larger scale works or explore a portfolio of your own compositions at a high level.

The MA is designed to address dynamic interrelationships between theory and practice. Theoretical concepts will be explored in relation to practice; practice will inform conceptualisations. The aspirations of the programme are to provide students with the opportunity to develop their own practice, their own thinking and provide them with a platform from which to disseminate their work.

The following have been identified as key features of the programme:

- A central focus on students' own individual compositional practice – there will be a constant thread of practice through the programme, whether students are enrolled part or full- time
- Opportunities for compositions to be performed and recorded
- Engagement with compositional strategies, with platforms for performance of work, with methods of practice-based research
- Opportunity for cross-disciplinary study with other creative practice MA programmes combined with in-depth and sustained investigation within MA Music Composition

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

- Provision of the opportunities and skills required for students to develop their portfolio as thinking practitioners
- Opportunity for students to utilise existing areas of their own existing composition practice as the basis for assessed work in the ma programme
- Collaboration opportunities across performance and production programmes

The School of Performance and Media Production facilitates a creative environment where collaboration across the different art forms is encouraged. Collaborations are not forced but rather students with similar or complimentary skills are brought together allowing positive connections to be made. From day one, in the module 'The Reflective Practitioner', students of all different disciplines share ideas and practices, and opportunities for collaboration often arise out of this.

The suite of performance and production MAs

The MA Music Composition is located within the School of Performance and Media Production suite of Masters programmes and shares delivery of core curriculum regarding practice-led research methodology with parallel MA degrees in the school. Together these represent a vibrant suite of practice-based postgraduate programmes in the creative arts. These MA programmes are designed for practitioner orientated study and research, providing students with the opportunity to develop their creative practice and reflective thinking within a supportive community of artists and a robust culture of enquiry.

Each of the MA programmes relate directly to strong and sustained practice-orientated programmes at BA level. The MA programmes are able to utilise staff, space and resources that work closely with these undergraduate programmes and provide opportunities for further study for students, higher level teaching for staff as well as the development of an increasingly strong practice/research culture across the School of Performance and Media Production.

Students on these MA programmes follow both discipline specific and a cross-disciplinary module in research methodologies, with teaching constituted as most appropriate. This allows the possibility of cross-disciplinary study and opportunity for collaboration with other art forms, permitting new insight and lateral thinking for in-depth and sustained investigation within the disciplines. We also recognise that many students view the MA as an opportunity to further their own artistic direction as a solo practitioner and this structure supports that in-depth approach to a personal project for those that desire it.

Each programme includes discipline specific practice-based modules, which are run independently from each other but which mirror each other with key conceptual concerns, including: a focus on compositional strategies of making; the development of students as confident reflexive practitioners; a consideration of dissemination, audience and context. Alongside the discipline specific modules is a core module with a focus on critical theory and research methodologies. This module brings students of different disciplines into dialogue with each other, helping support individual programmes and developing a cross-disciplinary culture and community.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [postgraduate](#) study. In addition:

- For all candidates there will be an interview and consideration of a portfolio of work, consisting of examples of their previous and current music composition practice. The portfolio is a central element of our consideration of applications and also an opportunity for the candidate to find out more about the programme. In interviews, all candidates will be asked to give a short presentation. The criteria for this are as follows:
 - Demonstration of readiness for graduate level practice
 - Evidence of engagement with critical thinking

We are happy to arrange interviews by distance for overseas students.

Candidates would normally be considered for interview if they meet the following criteria:

- Graduates with an honours degree at 2:2 or above in a related subject will normally register for the MA

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

The benchmark aim for the suite of MA awards in Performance and Production is:

- To provide a stimulating environment and appropriate critical interventions that enable students to operate with self-direction, professionalism and originality as reflexive practitioners.

The programme aim for the MA Music Composition is:

- To develop practitioners able to respond to complex issues within the discipline of music composition with criticality, reflexivity and creativity.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 7

- 7.1 A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current research, scholarship, problems and/or new insights, much of which is informed by the forefront of music composition knowledge and practice.
- 7.2 The ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- 7.3 A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own practice-led research in music composition.
- 7.4 The ability to continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.
- 7.5 Originality in the application of knowledge in music composition, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the field of music composition.
- 7.6 Self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional.
- 7.7 The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility and decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Programme structure

| Code | Level | Semester | Title | Credits | Module status | |
|----------|-------|----------|---|---------|---|--|
| | | | | | compulsory or optional to take C or O | non-compensatable or compensatable NC or X |
| PER7001M | 7 | 1 | The Reflective Practitioner | 20 | C | X |
| MUS7003M | 7 | 1 | Analysis, Composition and Dissemination | 40 | C | NC |
| MUS7004M | 7 | Year | Music Composition Independent Project | 120 | C | NC |

Programme delivery for the full-time programme will take place within 12 months (1 year).

The taught modules *The Reflective Practitioner* (20 credits) and *Analysis, Composition and Dissemination* (40 credits) are delivered in Semester 1.

The *Independent Project* is staged across the whole of the year but with flexibility of supervision within that time frame dependent upon the individual project requirements. All students have the same contact time but this can be positioned differently according to needs and by negotiation with the supervisors.

Full-time route

| Semester 1 | Semester 2 and 3 |
|--|---|
| The Reflective Practitioner (20) | Music Composition Independent Project (120) |
| Analysis, Composition and Dissemination (40) | |
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Part-time route

Programme delivery for the part-time programme will take place within 24 months (2 years).

This can be flexible but is likely to be along the lines of:

| Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | |
|--|------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| Semester 1 | Semester 2 | Semester 3 [summer] | Semester 1 | Semester 2 | Semester 3 [summer] |
| Analysis, Composition and Dissemination (40) | | | The Reflective Practitioner (20) | | |
| Music Composition Independent Project (120) | | | | | |

Learning, teaching and assessment

The programme has been designed to meet the needs of both students who have just finished undergraduate programmes, and returners to learning who may have already developed their own arts practice. Programme delivery will utilise a blended approach incorporating contact hours, group work and individual tutorials, SOL (Supported Open Learning) and learning supported by VLEs (Virtual Learning Environment).

The programme is concerned with ensuring that students have the opportunity to experience a wide range of teaching and learning strategies across the modules offered within its programme of study. These are structured to facilitate successful achievements of the learning outcomes of each module.

Students will be provided with a range of teaching and learning strategies across the modules, including:

- Reflective learning
- Independent learning
- Collaborative learning
- Facilitated learning

This process will be achieved through the use of a wide and varied range of teaching and learning methods, including workshop and studio sessions, seminar discussions, supervised projects and supported VLE learning. It is anticipated that semesters will be divided between periods of intense activity (extended weekends and a series of weekly sessions) and periods of independent reflection, supported by specific tasks, technician supported SOL, reading and proactive use of VLE (including forums, discussion groups, web publishing of documents). Examples include:

- Lectures
- Demonstrations
- Seminars
- Individual and group tutorials
- Group (peer-to-peer) critiques
- Group and individual presentations
- Visiting speakers/lecturers
- Visits to appropriate arts venues and performances
- Use of audio-visual material
- Use of e-learning
- Use of appropriate IT
- Workshops with key practitioners
- Supported open learning

Within modules, teaching will consist of a mixture of group seminars and individual tutorials as appropriate. The additional tutorial hours attached to each module will similarly be used flexibly, including bringing onto the module a wider range of staff input from tutors not timetabled to deliver taught contact.

The programme recognises the candidates' status as graduate students and, therefore, places a significant emphasis on independent learning. The programme, therefore, aims to provide an environment in which students are encouraged to take responsibility for their role in managing their learning and its outcomes.

The programme will be drawing its students from a variety of arts practice and theoretical backgrounds and will actively seek to foster modes of collaborative learning, in which knowledge, skills, and practical and critical experiences can be shared and exchanged.

The programme is underpinned by a requirement to engage in self-reflective learning, as a means of locating the students' own creative practice within a broader professional context. It will also facilitate an understanding of the students' own learning processes and their relationship with other creative practices.

Finally, through facilitated learning within a variety of contexts, the programme will both consolidate and challenge acquired research methodologies and modes of critical inquiry, in order to encourage the development of new and innovative forms of learning.

Assessment strategy

The assessment strategy has been developed to include formative and summative assessment in a variety of modes appropriate to the specific learning outcomes of the programme. Assessment strategies have also been developed within the particular context of a practice based programme and therefore involve significant scope for negotiation between student and tutor in the assessment of both practice based work itself and reflection on practice/process.

At the same time the programme design has been careful not to build in over assessment. Instead, in addition to formal assessment, module tutors will conduct formative assessment through evaluation of student development and progression at timely and significant points. In addition the assessment strategies invite students to monitor their own progress and facilitate peer-to-peer evaluation.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is built into all the modules in a number of forms, including:

- Tutor feedback on proposals, drafts, portfolios, plans and any other aspects of assignments in progress
- Individual and group presentations within seminars or workshops
- Responses to small-scale briefs and projects
- Tutor comments on VLE discussion forums
- Assessment of generic skills
- Peer-to-peer critiques and discussion
- Cross-disciplinary exploration

Formative assessment of this kind is fundamental to the teaching and assessment of practice based modules in the programme, where students will receive continuous informal feedback on works in progress through a combination of showings, discussions and written proposals.

Summative assessment

The programme uses a wide variety of forms of summative assessment. Assessment might include the following modes:

- Creative work presented for assessment (which may be scores, recordings or other)
- Essay
- Presentation/demonstration
- Workshop/event
- Annotated reflective document

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations](#) for postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission Statement](#) [see page two]
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [QAA subject benchmark statement](#)
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: 08/02/18

Programme originally approved: 08/02/18