

Programme Specification

Award and title:	BA (Hons) Musical Theatre
<i>School:</i>	School of the Arts
<i>Subject area:</i>	Music
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2021/22
<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>	N/A
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Musical Theatre Diploma of Higher Education Musical Theatre BA (Ord) Musical Theatre
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	None
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Dance, Drama and Performance (2019) Music (2019)
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Undergraduate 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>	Yes
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	Yes

Introduction and Special Features

This unique Musical Theatre offer places an emphasis on acting, singing and music making, dance and choreography, devising skills, and making new work that has aesthetic and social significance. It will ignite creativity, inspire, and equip innovative, original and compassionate musical theatre makers of the future. As a student on this programme, you will focus on creating and performing musical theatre as soloists, ensemble practitioners and community performance practitioners. You will sing, dance, act, devise and compose musical theatre in a whole range of professional contexts. The course will follow the main characteristics of the School of the Arts, which are:

- Creating (making and doing)
- Research embedded in teaching (intellectually generous, curious and rigorous)
- Social engagement (promoting fairness, challenging prejudice)

Whilst studying this Musical Theatre degree, you will 'do' your art, and create new work that has significance and impact on the communities that receive and engage with it. You will encounter, to a greater or lesser extent, engagement with your practice in the context of society, where reflection of your place in the world is considered in light of social and environmental justice. Similarly, staff research is not carried out in isolation of the students and the programmes but rather is often intrinsically linked, so that staff and students benefit from this shared curiosity.

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

Central to the teaching and learning of BA Musical Theatre is the understanding (physically, intellectually and emotionally) of what is required in the creation of a work, which is composite and resonant with meanings for an audience. The creation, composition, performance and documentation of work occur within a strong sense of social engagement, i.e. these pieces that you create have a purpose. You will develop your learning through the 'feeling-thinking-action' loop concurrently with critical enquiry, contextual awareness and self-motivation, summed up by the term 'enquiry-based learning'. Our graduates are versatile performers and musical theatre creators who will have the skillset to work within and for a wide variety of contexts that make a direct impact on our communities within both the commercial and educational sectors.

As a student, you will work, create and study alongside the tutors placing yourself at the centre of your own learning through the creation of live works for public consumption, field trips, meeting and working with various 'community' groups and creating documents. You will be taught through lectures, seminars in small groups, practical workshops, tutorials, peer-to-peer learning, performing in public contexts, ethnographic field trips and visiting guest artists. You will have regular extra-curricular dance technique classes in a range of styles including contemporary and jazz – the styles depend on student demand and global significance to dance and musical theatre. These classes will be shared with dance students from across all courses in the Performance department, thus enhancing the sense of community across all courses. Singing lessons will support your vocal skills and strengthen your performance abilities and confidence.

Classes and performances will take place in the newly built Creative Centre, which will provide professional and purpose-built learning spaces for all of our Performance students at York St John. The centre is set to become a major cultural player in York and will be one of the most significant cultural venues in the city. Musical Theatre students will use the following spaces within the Creative Centre:

- The Performance Space
 - o This 180 seat venue provides a performance space right in the heart of York, opening up many opportunities to form partnerships with music and community organisations and creatives in the City of York and beyond. It has been acoustically designed to accommodate many different musical styles and performing contexts, with a Steinway piano and a full theatrical rig for lights and sound. It will regularly host lunchtime and evening concerts, music, musical theatre and drama rehearsals and shows. This will be an incredible space where all our students can show their work publicly to potential funders and agents and professional networks. It will also mean that visiting professionals can share their touring work, as well as provide workshops and Q&A sessions that are highly valuable for our students if they are to connect with professional networks.
- The Workshop
 - o The Workshop is adjacent to the Performance Space and has shower facilities, making it an excellent dual-purpose facility. This space will also host many of our community activities that offer our students professional work placements as creative artists.
- The Atrium
 - o The atrium is the full height of the building making it an excellent space to promote the Performance Space programme to the wider University community and visitors from York and beyond. It will host a pop-up box office for the Performance Space and many other exciting site-specific events created by our students.
- The Recital Room
 - o This beautiful room will showcase the work of our small groups and soloists in Music and Musical Theatre. It has a piano and capacity for up to 50, with a balcony with views to the Minster and will be one of the most stunning small venues in York – perfect for showcases and networking.
- Music Practice Rooms
 - o These soundproof music practice rooms will be bookable for all students studying on all music routes and have been designed with needs of music and musical theatre students in mind.
- Band rooms

- o Each band room supports the group rehearsals for our students and one of these rooms serves as a high-tech recording studio where students can record and produce their own music.

The Performance Department staff team have decades of experience in delivering theatre and music degrees. Staff will encourage you to expand creatively and learn to create new work. A collaborative ethos underpins everything at YSJ, and you are taught to think on your feet, solve problems, engage in critical thinking, and research through practice. This will prepare you for your career and life beyond university.

YSJ is proud of the commitment to engaging with social, political and environmental issues through performance, and the course is designed to give opportunities for you to explore musical theatre in the immediate, and wider, community. You will have the opportunity to study abroad for one semester and will regularly take part in concert trips, external performances and educational visits. These may include, for example, trips to Paris and to the Edinburgh Fringe. There may be an additional cost for these trips.

This BA (Hons) Musical Theatre programme at York St John University is based on the following fundamental ideas:

1. Situated in the Performance suite, this is a programme for all musical theatre specialists, regardless of genre, style, or discipline. It focuses on your development as a self-reliant, creative practitioner.
2. This programme situates students' experience first and therefore places you at the centre of the learning experience.
3. All performative, creative and critical practices on the programme are integrated within current research. All staff are research active, and you will be engaged in that research, alongside peers, postgraduate researchers, and staff; practising and collaborating alongside each other.
4. All performative, creative and critical practices on the programme are considered through a pedagogic lens. A critical understanding of how learning occurs in musical theatre contexts is embedded in activities.
5. All performative, creative and critical practices on the programme are professionalised. The development of your employability and appropriate transferable skills are highlighted in all aspects of the programme, and work-related learning experiences are integrated into modules.
6. All performative, creative and critical practices on the programme are situated within wider societal contexts. Theory and practice are considered in terms of public engagement with cultural and ethical issues.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage.

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 Musical Theatre programme aims to help students develop:

1. as creative, innovative musical theatre artists and makers who draw on a range of both experimental and traditional techniques and strategies through their work,
2. as curious researchers who can present ideas through a variety of musical theatre styles and approaches to a range of professional theatre and community audiences

3. as professional musical theatre practitioners, performers and makers who positively impact the communities they may serve locally, nationally and globally.

Programme Learning Outcomes

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

Level 4

- 4.1 Identify, demonstrate, and integrate underlying musical theatre and dramatic approaches and strategies of musical theatre practice
- 4.2 Identify, acquire and apply ideas and concepts from historical and contemporary cultural research that inspire the creation of new work in musical theatre or related creative practice
- 4.3 Acquire, evaluate, and interpret primary or secondary research, in order to demonstrate understanding and question musical and theatrical concepts
- 4.4 Accurately and effectively present and communicate practical and theoretical work adhering to appropriate conventions
- 4.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the roles musical theatre and dramatic practices might play in society
- 4.6 Demonstrate qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility and sound judgement
- 4.7 Demonstrate knowledge of underlying concepts and principles of movement and drama practices and evaluate and interpret these concepts within musical theatre and other performance contexts
- 4.8 Develop new dramatic and performance skills within a structured and managed environment and apply these skills and approaches in making and critiquing musical theatre.

Level 5

- 5.1 Demonstrate knowledge and critical analysis of established musical and dramatic approaches and strategies within musical theatre practice
- 5.2 Extend and develop musical theatre and other theatrical ideas and concepts beyond their usual context in the creation of new work
- 5.3 Demonstrate a critical understanding of a variety of methods of research enquiry and use this to generate informed evaluation of musical theatre or performance practice or theory
- 5.4 Explore and critically evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to presenting practical and theoretical work to support professional performance making for musical theatre
- 5.5 Critically evaluate the appropriateness of music, movement or theatre-based approaches within musical theatre to address or frame issues and ideas in culture or society
- 5.6 Explore and evaluate qualities and transferable skills for employment, acquiring new competencies and responsibilities
- 5.7 Apply a range of techniques and approaches to movement, physicality and theatre engaging with the interplay between practice and theory.

Level 6

- 6.1 Autonomously review, consolidate, extend, and apply musical theatre and performance conventions, methods, and strategies in professional contexts
- 6.2 Autonomously and systematically integrate ideas, concepts, and artistic processes to create work at the current boundaries of musical theatre practice
- 6.3 Autonomously and systematically apply, or be informed by, methods of enquiry at the forefront of musical theatre or performance research, resulting in the acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge
- 6.4 Accurately and effectively present complex practical and theoretical work to both specialist and non-specialist audiences
- 6.5 Critically apply musical theatre, movement or theatre-based approaches to addressing complex issues in culture or society
- 6.6 Demonstrate leadership qualities, skills, and responsibilities in complex and unpredictable professional contexts.

Programme Structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module Status	
					Compulsory (C) or Optional (O)	Non-compensatable (NC) or Compensatable (X)
PER4016M	4	1&2	Cabaret	40	C	NC
PER4005M	4	1	Acting	20	C	X
PER4017M	4	2	Dance for Musical Theatre	20	C	X
PER4020M	4	1&2	Perspectives on Musical Theatre I	20	C	X
MUS4002M	4	1	Vox	20	C	X
PER5019M	5	1&2	Perspectives on Musical Theatre II	20	C	X
PER5021M	5	1&2	Professional Production	40	C	NC
PER5018M	5	2	Making Musical Theatre	20	C	X
PER5020M	5	1&2	Scenes Through Songs	20	C	X
Choose 20 credits from the following optional modules:						
PER5003M	5	1	Auto/biography and Performance	20	O	X
PER5004M	5	1	Children and Young People	20	O	X
PER5005M	5	1	Physical Theatre	20	O	X
PER5007M	5	1	Politics and the Play	20	O	X
PER5011M	5	1	Acting Vignettes	20	O	X
PER6010M	6	1	Repertoire 1	20	C	X
PER6011M	6	2	Repertoire 2	20	C	X
MUS6001M	6	1	Dissertation	20	C	X
PER6008M	6	1	Company 1	20	C	X
PER6009M	6	2	Company 2	40	C	NC

Please note that not all options may be available every year as they depend on student demand and staff availability.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Whilst on the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre, you will learn through experience. This is achieved by direct engagement with practical activity in musical theatre, theatre and dance, and through considered reflection on experiences and the key theories which underpin that practice.

Teaching activities are student-centred, putting your needs and the quality of experience first. At levels 5 and 6 there is an increased focus on the development of artistic specialisms, professional values, and on graduate employability.

All current research is integrated into the learning and teaching and embedded in activities is a critical understanding of how learning occurs in musical theatre contexts. On the staff teaching team we have artists who have written and produced full length musical theatre works. We have a range of partners, including York Theatre Royal, Converge, Prisons Partnership, International Centre for Community Music and many other artists who we work closely with in York community who our researchers create work with and generate many opportunities for our students to have placement work. Nearly all of these partners have been developed through the international research of our lecturing teams and our students benefit from their research expertise and intern opportunities as well as experiencing this new impactful work within the curriculum. There are many opportunities for our students to gain placements or work-based experience with our partners or on professional projects run by our staff team. These opportunities can range from understudying in professional theatre with a public matinee performance, gaining a graduate prize where your work is mentored by York Theatre Royal, facilitating creative work within schools, possibly towards public showcases and festivals, or gaining paid experience on a project as a student intern.

You will have an academic tutor, and tutorial support is available in all modules. There are no formal examinations. Assessment takes place through the submission of coursework: including essays, reflective writing, portfolios, and live events such as performances, presentations and placements.

Course Activities to Enhance the Teaching and Learning Experience

At every level BA (Hons) Musical Theatre allows the opportunity for you to engage in activities across modules and beyond the classroom. Noted below are examples of course activities that enhance your learning experience.

- Create and Co-Create festivals: you will get the opportunity to be part of these festivals through the Professional Production, Repertoire and Company modules;
- Performing House: individual artists and companies perform here on campus in the University's own Theatre. This gives you an opportunity to see the very best theatre work touring the UK. In addition, some artists offer Q&A sessions, tutorials or workshops with our students. All events are accessible through the on-line store;
- Field trips: There are module, level or programme specific field trips. We are aware though, in the current world situation, that guaranteeing trips is no longer possible.

The learning activities that you will take part in during your time on the degree will also present the opportunity to accumulate a set of skills which are highly valuable to employers; creativity, teamwork, the ability to collaborate, contextual awareness, problem solving, independence, and the ability to meet deadlines. In Level 4, early in your academic career, you will be asked to compile an audit of transferable skills you already have, then to consider what is your long-term career plan and construct other skills you need to acquire and where on the programme you can get them.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations](#) for undergraduate 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 and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: 04-01-21

Programme originally approved: