

## MMus in Composition

Awarding Institution:  
Teaching Institution:  
Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s):  
Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
For students entering in October 2004  
2003

The University of Reading  
The University of Reading  
Music  
Programme length: 1 year (2 yrs PT)  
Date of specification: September

Programme Director: Dr P.Q. Rhys  
Programme Adviser: Prof. J.M. Dunsby  
Board of Studies: Music  
Accreditation: None.

### Summary of programme aims

This programme aims to develop the student's technical ability in composing original music, to foster individual creativity, and to introduce the student to a wide range of differing styles and mediums available to the present-day composer. It will also aim to develop the student's ability to think critically about how to compose and to analyse both their own work and the work of other composers, past and present. Independent study is promoted and teaching is geared toward the individual development of students to provide an underpinning for further compositional development at doctoral level or its equivalent as well as offering a satisfying and rewarding experience those who take the MMus as an end in itself.

### Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working and use of information technology.

In addition, students will:

- Apply themselves to a creative task.
- Be aware of the ways and resources to develop their knowledge and understanding of composing music further.
- Be able to communicate clearly to others their own thinking and the reasons for it.
- Evaluate compositional ideas on the basis of the imaginative content and creative potential of those ideas.
- Use technology appropriately in their work.

In the compulsory Prescribed Scores module students will be able to study and discuss musical scores articulately and knowledgeably (see module description).

### Programme content

The programme consists of 180 credits: 90 in the Composition Portfolio (MUMCOP); 30 in the required Prescribed Scores module (MUMPSS); and 60 (30 + 30) chosen from Aesthetics (MUMAES), Criticism (MUMCRT), Historical Performance Practice (MUMHPP), History of Theory (MUMHOT) or Notation (MUMNOT).

Compulsory Modules (students choose two options)

|        |                       |            |         |
|--------|-----------------------|------------|---------|
| MUMCOP | Composition Portfolio | 90 credits | Level M |
| MUMPSS | Prescribed Scores     | 30 credits | Level M |

| Optional Modules |                      |            |         |
|------------------|----------------------|------------|---------|
| MUMAES           | Aesthetics           | 30 credits | Level M |
| MUMMUC           | Criticism            | 30 credits | Level M |
| MUMHPP           | Historical           |            |         |
|                  | Performance Practice | 30 credits | Level M |
| MUMHOT           | History of Theory    | 30 credits | Level M |
| MUMNOT           | Notation             | 30 credits | Level M |

### **Part-Time/Modular arrangements**

The programme can be taken part-time over two years. In the first year of study, a student will normally complete the Prescribed Scores and two optional modules; in the second year of study, a student will be required to complete the Composition Portfolio. The programme may not be completed over more than two years.

### **Progression requirements**

Students can earn a Certificate for satisfactory completion of 60 credits but less than 120 credits in which case at least 60 credits must be in work towards a Composition Portfolio MUMCOP, and a Diploma for 120 credits but less than 180 in which case 90 credits must in a Composition Portfolio MUMCOP.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

| <u>Mark</u>                | <u>Interpretation</u>         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 70 – 100%                  | Distinction                   |
| 60 – 69%                   | Merit                         |
| 50 – 59%                   | Good standard (Pass)          |
| <u>Failing categories:</u> |                               |
| 40 – 49%                   | Work below threshold standard |
| 0 – 39%                    | Unsatisfactory Work           |

#### *For Masters Degrees*

To pass the degree of Master students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the *portfolio and have no mark below 40 in the prescribed scores module*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.\*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be awarded a Merit.

#### *For Postgraduate Diplomas*

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40 in portfolio or prescribed scores modules*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.\*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be awarded a Merit.

## *For Postgraduate Certificate*

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40 in portfolio or prescribed scores modules*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.\*

\*The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied himself or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

### **Summary of teaching and assessment**

Teaching methods will vary from module to module but teaching will primarily be by means of lectures, individual and group tutorial and seminars.

The Composition module will be assessed partly by a portfolio of original compositions supported by a brief written commentary (see module description for MUMCOP). The organizing of performance of at least some of the work composed is integral to this assessment although secondary to the artistic and intellectual standing of the music itself.

The Prescribed Scores module will be assessed by two coursework presentations and by a *viva voce* examination (to which students may bring copies of the music annotated in any way they wish) in June.

### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained an undergraduate honours degree in music normally at upper second class level, and a level of achievement in composition (or other relevant skill) equivalent to a first class honours standard undergraduate submission or equivalent.

All applicants are considered on their individual merits and Music may vary these requirements if it sees fit.

Admissions Tutor: Prof. J.M. Dunsby

### **Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Within Music, personal and academic tutors will provide help and guidance on academic, and where appropriate, other matters. Music offers the provision of a specialist Music Library including scores and recordings of Western Music from the medieval period to the present as well as some holdings of popular and world musics. We also offer on-site computing including MIDI equipment and notation software such as Sibelius®. Workshops and other stimulus to a sharing of compositional issues and experiences will be provided.

### **Career prospects**

Success in the MMus Performance programme will indicate that the student has the training, knowledge and experience to embark on or consolidate a professional career in the musical profession, including further development in a practice-based doctoral programme. A postgraduate music degree provides an excellent training in intellectual and organizational skills of interest to a wide variety of potential employers.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

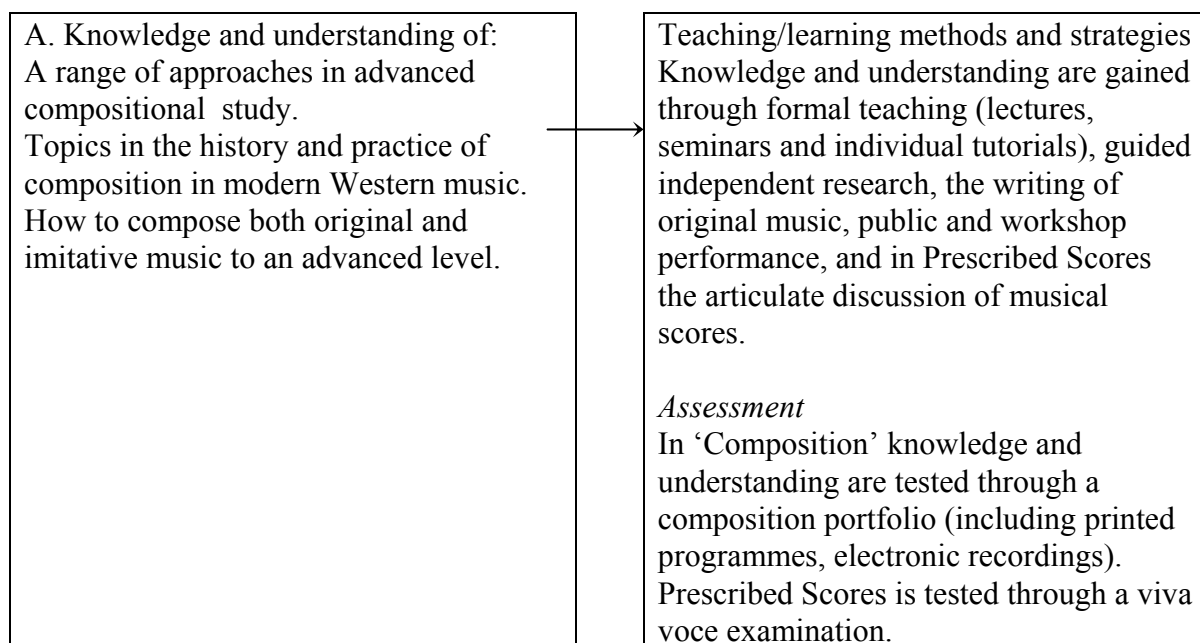
The programme does not involve study abroad.

### **Educational aims of the programme**

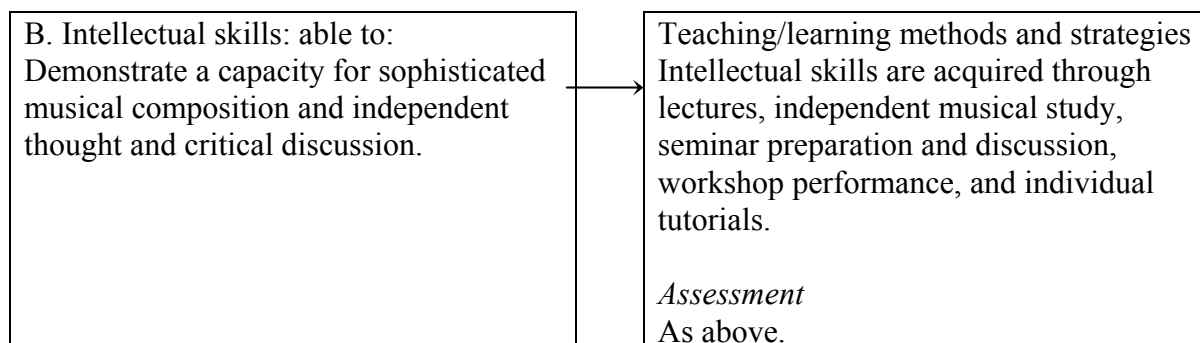
The overarching aim is to provide a programme of study which affords a conceptual framework for the technical study of music concentrating on the goal of committed musical composition. Students will acquire and learn how to apply contextual theoretical and historical knowledge.

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### *Knowledge and Understanding*



#### *Skills and other attributes*



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>C. Practical skills: able to:<br/>         Compose music with an appropriate command of the relevant technical requirements to an advanced level.<br/>         Conduct a critical argument using relevant theoretical approaches.<br/>         Apply appropriate conventions in the presentation of all assessed work.<br/>         Use compositional electronic technology including sampling, synthesis, mixing etc. to an advanced level where appropriate.</p> | <p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies<br/>         As above</p> <p><i>Assessment</i><br/>         As above</p> |
|---|--|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>D. Transferable skills – able to:<br/>         Identify and use appropriate IT (including word-processing, standard notation software and databases).<br/>         Use library and archival resources.<br/>         Write fluently and critically.<br/>         Give effective oral and skills-based presentations.<br/>         Work as part of a team.<br/>         Solve problems effectively.<br/>         Manage time.<br/>         Plan and manage future careers.<br/>         Assimilate cultural issues.</p> | <p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies<br/>         As above</p> <p><i>Assessment</i><br/>         Due to the project-based nature of the composition programme transferable skills are integrally assessed in all work submitted.</p> |
|--|---|

*Please note:* This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.