

Programme Specification

Award and title: MA Music

<i>School:</i>	Arts
<i>Subject area:</i>	Performance
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<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, York campus
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate in Music Postgraduate Diploma in Music
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<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 1
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No
<i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</i>	No

Introduction and special features

MA Music at York St John University is designed to help musicians become leading entrepreneurs in today's sector. This programme supports you in professionalising your creative voice through all your musical activities: performing, composing, facilitating, teaching, and recording. You will be coached by a core academic team who themselves are adaptable, creative, and active across the sector. Your intensive, reflective relationship with these coaches will be augmented by bespoke input from guest practitioners and professional networks. At York St John University, you will join a diverse and inclusive community of musicians who challenge themselves, established traditions, and the sector to improve the musical landscape on local, national, and international levels. You will work in our brand-new spaces designed for the modern musician — most notably, our Creative Centre featuring a full auditorium, recital room, percussion room, teaching spaces, and practice rooms.

People who choose to study with us will identify themselves as a musician who embraces a range of practices: in particular, multi-instrumentalists, singer/songwriters, and improvisers. The work you create on the programme will similarly reflect your passions and strengths; this could include performances within our

Creative Centre or iconic venues in York, recordings of original music developed in conjunction with our Music Production team, facilitated sessions with any of the numerous local community groups and schools, leadership of your own professional ensembles, or even collaborations with Fine Artists to create installations or interactive sonic spaces. The MA Music programme is fundamentally designed to be responsive to your interests and needs in the context of the current and future music sector.

On the MA Music programme many of our former students have gone on to develop careers in music as composers, performers, teachers, community facilitators, producers or lecturers, whilst others have continued their studies at PhD level at York St John University. Ultimately, the MA Music is about preparing you to become a creative and inspiring member of an evolving musical ecosystem. You will develop individualised, sustainable strategies for refining your craft-making throughout your career. Through this programme, you will boldly and confidently lead in the growth of the music sector.

In joining our taught postgraduate community at York St John University, you will be part of a local, national and global creative community that connects you to a network of artists through projects and experiences that prepare you for successful careers in the arts. Community, collaboration and real-world learning experience are integral to our design, meaning you will benefit from cross-disciplinary peer-to-peer learning and shared creative industry networks. All our postgraduate degrees operate within the heart of the city of York, which is the only UNESCO city of Media Arts in the UK and one of twenty-two globally. York St John University is also the home for the International Centre for Community Music whose projects operate in various locations globally. These locations have included Solomon Islands, New Zealand, Malawi, Brazil and North America and many more. The MA Music captures the importance of cross-cultural and transmedia approaches for today's artists and supports students' aspirations to collaborate with projects in film, digital production, live performance and more.

This degree comes as part of a suite of creative MAs in the Performance department that offers more opportunities for you to collaborate creatively and to develop as a creator and producer in ways that more accurately reflect the interconnected worlds of work you will graduate into. Students from both Theatre and Music share key modules that support creative careers and open the possibilities for collaborations right from the start of the degree. These MAs will support careers as a freelance and portfolio artist and provide the skillset to work across varied fields including the third sector, educational organisations, national portfolio organisations, and commercial enterprises. As students' routes into postgraduate degrees are becoming increasingly varied, we recognise the importance of supporting students on part-time routes.

Special Features

- Taught by professional composers and music performers
- Career focused and practice based
- Opportunities to engage with the International Centre for Community Music

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 theatre and performance 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 (e.g. Drama, Theatre, Live Art, Dance, Music, Place/Space/Time Based Art, Creative Writing) 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.yorks.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)

To support the professionalisation of your developing music practice within a community of leading international artists, and connect your work with a local, regional and international innovative artistic community.

To make or facilitate new work through the development and application of your creative skills that engages audiences and/or communities.

Programme learning outcomes

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

Level 7

- 7.1 Demonstrate a systematic understanding and a critical awareness of current research, scholarship, practice and problems and/or new insights in music, locally, nationally and globally.
- 7.2 Manage complex issues through methodological and creative approaches, to make sound judgements and communicate conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- 7.3 Evidence a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own practice-led research in music.
- 7.4 Advance subject knowledge and understanding independently, developing new skills to a high level.
- 7.5 Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge in music, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the field.
- 7.6 Apply self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level.
- 7.7 Appraise qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment, requiring the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations along with the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
PER7006M	7	1	Methods of Reflective Practice	30	C	X
PER7008M	7	1	Music Creative Practice	30	C	X
PER7009M	7	2	Creative Entrepreneurship	30	C	X
PER7010M	7	3	Independent Research	30	C	X
PER7012M	7	2, 3	Music Independent Project	60	C	NC

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensable. A non-compensable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level with a mark of 50 in order to progress.

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 visiting practitioners and placements.

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.

You 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 supporting virtual learning environments (VLE) such as Moodle and Teams. It is anticipated that semesters will be divided between periods of intense activity and periods of independent reflection, supported by specific tasks, technician supported open learning, 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 your status as a graduate student and, therefore, places a significant emphasis on independent learning. The programme, therefore, aims to provide an environment in which you are encouraged to take responsibility for your role in managing your 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 your own creative practice within a broader professional context. It will also facilitate an understanding of the your own learning processes and your 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.

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-compensable.

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](#)
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Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: