

# Programme Specifications:

## MA in Musical Theatre Performance

Updated May 2020

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### HE LEVEL 7

1.	Awarding Institution:	University of London
2.	Teaching Institution:	Royal Academy of Music
3.	Final Award:	MA (Musical Theatre)
4.	Programme Title:	<b>MA in Musical Theatre Performance</b>
5.	Date of Production:	2017

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### 6 Programme Aims

- (a) To encourage the development of performers with a distinctive and original artistic personality.
- (b) To provide aspiring performers with a bridge to a successful career.
- (c) To create an artistic and educational environment where performers can reach the highest possible standards and consolidate their technical skills.
- (d) To provide a programme of study appropriate to the needs of individual students.
- (e) To provide opportunities for students to be involved in a wide range of ensemble activities.
- (f) To give regular opportunities for performance in a wide range of contexts, both competitive and non-competitive.
- (g) To stimulate habits of self-awareness and self-criticism that will prepare students for the challenges of the music profession.
- (h) To encourage students to develop repertoire interests that will help promote their performance careers.

### 7 Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme students should be able to demonstrate the following:

#### **7.1 Knowledge and Understanding** – a student will be able to:

- (i) demonstrate a wide knowledge of the repertoire related to their Principal Study, and an understanding of performance practices and traditions.
- (j) demonstrate an understanding of principles of style and interpretation as demanded by performance at the highest level.
- (k) show awareness of the standards and demands of the profession.

- (l) show an awareness of the demands of the profession as they relate to their individual profile

**Subject-Specific Skills and Other Attributes** – a student will be able to:

- (m) design and deliver a repertoire and audition portfolio (performers) or a range of arrangements (MDs) to a high professional standard that effectively represents the student’s individual profile
- (n) deliver performances to high professional standards in line with demands set by creative and production teams
- (o) demonstrate a distinctive interpretative personality which is convincing in live performance.
- (p) demonstrate confidence in adapting presentational skills to the demands of different performance and presentation contexts.
- (q) participate actively in organising and delivering concerts to a high professional standard.
- (r) show efficiency in organising and prioritising a busy performance and practice schedule.

**7.2 Key and Transferable Skills** – a student will be able to:

- (s) communicate intentions effectively whether working one-to-one or in a team.
- (t) respond to criticism in a positive fashion, while maintaining confidence in his or her own creative work.
- (u) evaluate and assess his or her own abilities, and to know when to seek advice or feedback.
- (v) be aware of key career opportunities.

## 8 Delivery and Assessment of the Programme

### 8.1 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Map (and their ILOs)

<b>Learning and Teaching Processes</b> (designed to allow students to achieve the intended learning outcomes)	<b>Assessment methods</b> (designed to allow students to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes)
One-to-one and Group Principal Study Lessons (a,b,c,d,g,h,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,p,s,t,u,v)	Agent Showcase (a,b,c,d,e,f,h,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,q,r,s,t,u,v)
Integration Classes (a,b,c,d,g,h,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,p,s,t,u,v)	Final Show (a,b,c,d,e,f,h,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,q,r,s,t,u,v)
Masterclasses (a,b,c,d,f,g,h,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,p,q,s,tu,v)	Professional Skills Profile (all ILOs)
Directed Ensemble Projects (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,j,k,l,n,o,p,q,r,s,t,u,v)	Portfolio (a,c,e,i,k,l,o,r,s,t,u,v)

## 8.2 Learning and Teaching Processes

The programme uses a range of teaching methods to ensure that students' learning processes are stimulating, challenging, diverse and complementary. The principal modes of teaching are described below:

- **One-to-one and group classes for Principal Study (Performers and MDs).** This working 'environment' (which is a defining feature of specialist conservatoire training) is designed to foster the passing on of discipline-specific professional/artistic practices, and to enable students to develop key professional skills that relate directly to their individual abilities and artistry: musical technique, interpretation skills, repertoire building, programme/portfolio building; audition techniques, and so on. The reflective nature of the relationship between teacher and student is a key element in the development of reflective, critical and informed attitudes to performance.
- **Integration classes (Performers and MDs)** provide a bridge between one-to-one tuition, masterclasses, and public performances. They allow students to present work-in-progress and receive informal feedback from departmental staff, guest lecturers, and from their peers. They are designed to enable students to gain insights into technical and interpretative issues, and to develop their critical faculties in relation to their own creative processes and performances, and those of others.
- **Masterclasses (Performers and MDs)** provide students with opportunities to present work to a leading visiting artist, in a closed (open only to other students and departmental staff), as well as in an open setting (open to other students, departmental staff and members of the public). Like integration classes, masterclasses complement one-to-one tuition by widening the range of interpretative judgment to which the students are subject. They are designed to expose students to the very highest international professional standards and provide additional high-profile performance opportunities.
- **Directed Ensemble Projects (Performers and MDs)** are the means by which small or large groups of performers receive tuition and training in preparation for internal (closed) and external (public) performances. Rehearsals and performances in large ensembles are designed to develop: (i). an ability to work co-operatively; (ii). a sense of professional discipline and rigour; (iii). the particular technical and artistic skills of ensemble performance; (iv). knowledge of the repertoire. All students participate in devised work (e.g. cabaret development) as part of the programme of study. Devised work is mostly student-directed, with periodic coaching by a member of staff. This mode of study is designed to develop: (i). ability to work autonomously; (ii). ability to solve interpretative and technical issues to the end of developing coherent performances; (iii). knowledge of the repertoire.
- **Conducting classes (MDs)** provide students with the opportunity to examine the art of conducting and the role and responsibilities of the professional conductor in a Musical Theatre context. Students will work on developing a strong technical foundation, practise beating patterns, the means to communicate musical intentions through gesture, an ability to be both self-aware and self-critical and a better understanding of the complex relationship that exists between a conductor and performers. Additionally, MD students will have the opportunity to conduct the Musical Theatre company at various stages throughout the year. All MD students will practice conducting in a

classroom environment conducting each other at the piano under the guidance of departmental staff and guest lecturers.

- **Orchestration/Arranging classes (MDs)** provide students the opportunity to develop a strong foundation in arranging and orchestration whilst working to specific deadlines for projects across the academic year. Students are made aware of industry expectations and how best to serve individual performers or ensembles whilst fulfilling the overall purpose of individual projects.
- **Music Technology classes (MDs)** give students the opportunity to practice and enhance their knowledge of digital technology and how it applies to a musical theatre context.
- **Academic supervisions (Performers and MDs)** provide the opportunity for academic staff to develop, monitor, and critique work on the Portfolio, and to provide specialist input where applicable.

### 8.3 Assessment

Two precepts underpin the programme's assessment strategy: (i). the function of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes at an appropriate level; (ii). assessment promotes and supports student learning. All components have appropriate descriptive marking guidelines whose function is to ensure comparability of standards across all levels and activities within the programme, to demonstrate these standards to external bodies, and to promote transparency within the Academy. The varied assessment methods used in the programme are designed to provide the most appropriate means of evaluating student achievement, to promote different types of learning experience, and to avoid excessive formal examining.

- **Agent Showcase.** This enables students to demonstrate their achievements in relation to a broad range of the intended learning outcomes, including those concerned with technical and interpretative skills, communication and presentational skills. This assessment focuses on the outcome rather than the process.
- **Final Show.** The principal aim of the assessment is to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their artistry and skills in movement, character, voice and collaboration (performers) or direction, accompanying and collaboration (MDs), working with set-design, costumes and props, etc. This assessment focuses primarily on process.
- **Professional Skills.** The principal aim of assessment here is to ensure students understand the requirements of the profession. The various assessment strategies are designed to complement the summative assessments of Singing, Acting, Spoken Word, Integration of Singing and Acting, Dance, Internal Projects, and Competitions, and to represent the full range of Principal Study skills required in the profession. Department activities are also vital to the monitoring the development of key and transferable skills.
- **Portfolio.** The Portfolio provides an opportunity to assess the full range of a student's activities during their period of study and their reflections on the roles and significance of individual components. The assessment focuses on communicating self-management skills and the extent to which students can demonstrate their process of preparation for the profession.

## 9 Programme Structure

The MA in Musical Theatre Performance is a very intensive one-year programme (10 months). Students work in a 'company-like' environment.

Students who pass all summative assessments except the Portfolio will be offered a PGCert as an exit award.

### 9.1 Component Areas

MA Credits	Breakdown
180 credits	Principal Study: Individual lessons and studies – 80 credits Professional Skills – 60 credits
	Portfolio: 40 credits

#### Principal Study

Credit Value	140 credits (80 Individual, 60 Professional Skills)
Summary Assessment	Agent Showcase and Final Show
Summative Assessment	75% of final award <b>Final Show</b> (50% of mark) <b>Agent Showcase</b> (50% of mark)
Teaching Delivery	1:1 lessons Departmental classes and ensembles (see Musical Theatre Handbook)
Formative Assessment	<b>Professional Skills Profile</b> This will be built from formative assessment of the following: For Performers – Singing, Acting, Spoken Word, Integration of Singing and Acting, Dance, Internal Projects, and Competitions. For MDs – an appropriate selection of the above plus Conducting, Orchestration/Arranging, and Music Technology.

#### Portfolio

Credit Value	40 credits
Summative Assessment	25%
Format of Assessment	Holistic assessment of final portfolio submission.
Teaching Delivery	<u>Core</u> : Professional Skills <u>Supervision</u> : Group and individual sessions with a member of the PG Tutor team.

## **10 Student Support**

Students receive an induction programme which includes: an induction into library and IT facilities; guidance on health and safety (including audiometric testing); registration; international student meetings; introduction to senior staff with programme responsibilities; tutorial meeting. Students are supported in all aspects of their subsequent life and work at the Academy throughout the duration of the programme in the following dedicated ways:

- 10.1 Head of Musical Theatre (with responsibility for the Musical Theatre Department and for overseeing the specific needs of the student in consultation with the Tutor)
- 10.2 Designated Tutor (with responsibility for academic and pastoral support)
- 10.3 Dean of Students (oversees student support, learning resources, recruitment and admissions plus our access and participation activities)
- 10.4 Library (staffed by subject specialists who can advise on sheet music, instrumental and vocal parts, musicological materials, reference works, on-line resources, and materials from the Academy's special collections)
- 10.5 IT Helpdesk
- 10.6 Counsellors (who provide confidential pastoral support as trained professionals)
- 10.7 Disability Advisor: The Disability Advisor and support team are responsible for the implementation of the Academy's Disability Equality Policy and Action Plan
- 10.8 Alexander Technique co-ordinator: The Alexander Technique co-ordinator and support team teach Alexander Technique – an established method to improve posture and prevent repetitive strain injury.
- 10.9 Artist Development Lecturers; provide one-to-one consultations with students and can help with issues such as creating a biography or CV, writing letters to promoters, sourcing funding and contractual issues.
- 10.11 Estates Manager: who advises on student accommodation issues
- 10.12 The Royal Academy of Music Students' Union
- 10.13 The English Language Support team and Helpdesk

## **11 Distinctive Aspects of the Programme**

The Academy's focus on excellence in musical performance and creativity is reflected in four distinctive aspects of the programme:

- 11.1 Owing to its competitive entry and international reputation, the programme attracts a cosmopolitan, strongly motivated, and very talented student body, which gives participants a realistic sense of the demands required to be at the top of the profession.
- 11.2 The Academy's teaching is delivered by leading professional figures, whether in weekly lessons or in high-profile closed and public masterclasses, so that students are educated in a culture that engenders the highest professional standards in relation to artistic interpretation and technical discipline.

- 11.3 The programme is designed to enable students to make the most of the educational opportunities afforded by being at the cultural heart of Europe's leading city for musical theatre. This is reflected in the outward looking aspects of the Academy's musical life (including public concerts, research events and the work of Open Academy).
- 11.4 The Academy's world-class collections of string and keyboard instruments, music manuscripts, early printed materials, and other musical artefacts, together with the Galleries and Collections programme of exhibitions and events, provide a rich resource to support and enhance the student learning experience.