

# Programme Specifications:

## Master of Arts (Performance or Composition)

Updated May 2020

---

### HE LEVEL 7

1	Awarding Institution:	University of London
2	Teaching Institution:	Royal Academy of Music
3	Final Award:	MA in Performance or Composition London: Royal Academy of Music
4	Programme Title:	MA in Performance or Composition
5	Date of Production:	2010

---

### 6 Programme Aims

- (a) To encourage the development of performers/composers with a distinctive and original artistic personality.
- (b) To provide aspiring musicians with a bridge to a successful career in performance/composition.
- (c) To create an artistic and educational environment where performers/composers can reach the highest possible standards and consolidate their technical skills.
- (d) To provide programmes of study appropriate to the needs of individual students.
- (e) To encourage students to become involved in a full range of ensemble activities related to their Principal Study or to provide students with the challenge of writing for different resources and of meeting different functions.
- (f) To give regular opportunities for performance in wide range of contexts, both competitive and non-competitive or to give regular opportunities for students' works to be performed and for them to collaborate with other artists.
- (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 or to help students become aware of current compositional trends and how these connect to their own interests.

### 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:
- (a) demonstrate a wide knowledge of the repertoire related to their Principal Study, and an understanding of performance practices and traditions or demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of a wide range of compositional techniques.
  - (b) demonstrate an understanding of principles of style and interpretation as demanded by performance at the highest level or demonstrate knowledge of compositional practice within a variety of historical and aesthetic contexts, while showing a particular understanding of more recent compositional developments.
  - (c) show awareness of the standards and demands of the musical profession.
  - (d) show awareness of the demands of concert-giving in all its organisational and artistic aspects or show awareness of the standards and demands of the musical profession, including those relating to performance, music publication, recording, and promotion.
  - (e) show an awareness of the demands of the profession as they relate to their individual profile
- 7.2 Subject-Specific Skills and Other Attributes (Performers) – a student will be able to:
- (f) design and deliver a recital programme (or its equivalent) to a high professional standard.
  - (g) deliver an effective End of Year Recital (not applicable to 1-year MA).
  - (h) demonstrate a distinctive interpretative personality which is convincing in live performance, in both solo and ensemble contexts.
  - (i) demonstrate confidence in adapting presentational skills to the demands of different performance and presentation contexts.
  - (j) participate actively in organising and delivering concerts to a high professional standard.
  - (k) show efficiency in organising and prioritising a busy performance and practice schedule.
  - (l) participate actively in a range of enhanced department-based skills.
- 7.3 Subject-Specific Skills and Other Attributes (Composers) – a student will be able to:
- (m) deliver a balanced portfolio of compositions to a high professional standard.
  - (n) demonstrate a distinctive compositional personality in a variety of musical contexts.
  - (o) demonstrate confidence in adapting compositional processes to the demands of different performance contexts.
  - (p) participate actively in organising and delivering performances to a high professional standard.
  - (q) show skills in producing scores, performance parts, and, where

appropriate, recordings of their compositions to a high professional level.

- (r) show confidence in articulating compositional choices, both in verbal and non-verbal ways.
- (s) demonstrate an awareness of how personal compositional choices might relate to the examples of others, past and present.
- (t) deliver an end-of-year portfolio of compositional works (not applicable to a one-year programme of study).
- (u) participate actively in a range of enhanced departmental-based skills

#### 7.4 Key and Transferable Skills – a student will be able to:

- (v) communicate intentions effectively whether working one-to-one or in a team.
- (w) respond to criticism in a positive fashion, while maintaining confidence in their own creative work.
- (x) take responsibility for managing their own learning and professional development.
- (y) evaluate and assess their own abilities, and to know when to seek advice or feedback.
- (z) be aware of key career opportunities and the need for forward planning.

## 8 Delivery and Assessment of the Programme

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

Learning and Teaching Processes (designed to allow students to achieve the intended learning outcomes)	Assessment methods (designed to allow students to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes)
One-to-one Principal Study Lessons (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i,j,k,m,n,o,p,q,r,s,t,w,x,y,z)	Final Examination Part 1 (a,b,c,d,e,f,h,i,j,k,m,n,o,q,r,s,v,x)
Performance Classes (a,b,c,d,h,i,k,w,x,y,z)	Final Examination Part 2 (a,b,c,h,i,k,l,n,o,p,q,x,y,z)
Masterclasses (a,b,c,d,h,i,k,q,r,s,w,x,y,z)	Professional Skills Profile (varies according to the department)
Directed Ensemble Coaching (orchestra, etc.) (a,b,c,d,e,h,i,j,k,l,v,w,y,z)	Portfolio (a,c,e,i,k,l,o,r,s,x,y,z)
Ensemble Coaching (a,b,c,d,e,h,i,j,k,l,o,p,q,r,u,v,w,x,y,z)	Artist Development Events and Classes (ILOs specific to individual events / classes – complementary to Portfolio ILOs)
Lectures (a,b,c,d,e,h,i,j,k,n,o,q,r,s,v,z)	
Seminars (a,b,c,d,e,h,i,j,k,n,o,q,r,s,v,z)	



## 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:

- Individual lessons for Principal Study. Regular one-to-one work with a Principal Study teacher underpins the core aims of the programme. 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.
- Performance classes provide a bridge between one-to-one tuition, masterclasses, and concert performances. They allow students to present work-in-progress and receive informal feedback from departmental staff 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 provide students with opportunities to present work to a leading visiting artist, normally in an 'open' setting (open to other students and members of the public). Like performance 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.
- Ensemble and Directed Ensemble coaching is the means by which small or large groups of performers receive one-to-one tuition in preparation for concert 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 musical skills of large ensemble performance; (iv) knowledge of the repertoire. All students participate in chamber music work as part of the programme of study. Small ensemble work is mostly student-directed, with periodic coaching by a member of staff. This mode of study is designed to develop: (i) close working relationships that are essential for high-level chamber music-making; (ii) ability to work autonomously; (iii) ability to solve interpretative and technical issues to the end of developing coherent performances; (iv) knowledge of the repertoire.
- Lectures provide a forum for the dissemination of ideas, information and skills to the end of establishing a sound and sustainable knowledge base. They serve as models for organizing materials into a coherent argument.

- Seminars are designed to encourage the sharing of ideas and the development of structured arguments and debating skills. They encourage students to develop their critical faculties and presentational skills through the presentation and defence of their own views, together with the opportunity to critique the views of their peers and tutor. Seminars are appropriate for aspects of the Portfolio provision that require a mix of staff-led delivery, student-led debate, and interactive supervision.
- Academic supervisions 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.

- Final Examination Part Two (Final Recital or Composition Portfolio). This is the focal point of the programme and is the primary assessment method for the Principal Study component. It 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, and programme design skills.
- Final Examination Part One (often a Concerto Examination). Requirements differ across Principal Study departments but the principal aim of the assessment is to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate skills in areas that may not fit easily into the format of a typical recital. It addresses the same ILOs as the Final Examination Part 2 from a complementary perspective. (Composition students do not have a separate part One.)
- Professional Skills Profile. This is formatively assessed and requirements differ significantly across Principal Study departments. The principal aim of assessment here is to ensure students understand the requirements of the profession and have acquired a portfolio of necessary skills. The various assessment strategies are designed to complement the summative assessments of the Final Examinations and to represent the full range of Principal Study skills required in the profession. Professional Skills are also vital to 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 communication self-management skills and the extent to which students can demonstrate their process of preparation for the profession.

## 9 Programme Structure

The MA in Performance or Composition is usually a two-year full-time programme but can be taken in one year, depending on the Principal Study level at which the student enters and the range of professional skills which may still require development. There is no provision for part-time study. An assessment is made at audition as to whether the programme can be successfully completed in one year and this is open to review during the first term of study in consultation with the relevant Head of Department, the student's Principal Study teacher, the Tutor and the Head of Programme. Students taking the award over two years receive credits in the second year only (the first year is thus non-credit bearing if a student successfully progresses into year two). If a student does not progress into year two they are awarded credits (which could be transferred to another institution) according to the activities undertaken.

Progression to the second year (for students on the two-year programme) is dependent on successfully passing the following formative assessments: End-of-Year Performance examination (pass/fail), End-of-Year Portfolio and year one Professional Skills Profile.

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual lessons and studies – 80 credits</li> <li>• Professional Skills – 60 credits</li> </ul>
	Portfolio: 40 credits

### Principal Study

Credit Value	140 credits (80 Individual, 60 Professional Skills)	
Summary Assessment	75% of final award	
Summative Assessment	For Performers: Final Examination Part One: $\frac{1}{3}$ of mark Final Examination Part Two (usually a Final Recital): $\frac{2}{3}$ of mark	For Composers: Composition Portfolio 100% of mark
	For both Performers and Composers: Professional Skills Profile: Formative Assessment as required also reported on by Heads of Department	
Teaching Delivery	1:1 lessons Faculty classes and ensembles	

### Portfolio

Credit Value	40 credits
Summative Assessment	25% of final award
Format of Assessment	Assessment of portfolio presentation including commentaries (Holistic Assessment)
Teaching Delivery	Introductory lectures (weeks 1 & 2) Individual Supervision Artist Development Events and Classes



## 10 Student Support

Students receive an induction programme which includes: diagnostic testing for placement in appropriate tutorial; groups; advice on learning support; 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 Tutor (with responsibility for academic and pastoral support)
- 10.2 Head of Department (with responsibility for the student's Principal Study Department and for overseeing the specific needs of the student in consultation with the Tutor)
- 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.
- 10.10 Estates Manager: who advises on student accommodation issues
- 10.11 The Royal Academy of Music Students' Union
- 10.12 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 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 classical music. 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.