

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
2	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
3	<b>Final Award</b>	BMus(Hons)
4	<b>Programme Title</b>	BMus Hons Popular and Contemporary Music
5	<b>UCAS/Programme Code</b>	W301
6	<b>Programme Accreditation</b>	n/a
7	<b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	Music
8	<b>FHEQ Level</b>	Honours
9	<b>Date written/revised</b>	May 2011

### 10 Programme Aims

1. to enable students to extend and deepen their practical musical skills
2. to broaden the range of contemporary musics in which such skills can be practised
3. to place the practical activities within the context of a critical understanding of twentieth-century musical practices, their historical development and their role in contemporary culture
4. to stimulate the development of thoughtful, well-informed musicians specialising in contemporary and popular musics, but with an informed perspective of the wider study of music; and thereby,
5. to promote understanding of and engagement with a range of musical repertoires including popular and contemporary repertoires;
6. to enable students to extend and deepen their practical musical skills within the context of a critical understanding of current musical practices, their historical development, and their role in contemporary culture;
7. to provide a sound musical and academic training encompassing approaches that are historically contextualised, theoretically informed, practically demonstrated, technically fluent and creatively inventive;
8. to offer structured choice and flexibility so that students can pursue their own interests and aptitudes within a determined curricular structure;
9. to develop an awareness both of traditional areas of study and of recent and current developments in musical thinking and intellectual inquiry;
10. to cultivate skills which are valuable in themselves, of benefit to future employers and, wherever possible, provide firm foundations for postgraduate study;
11. to conform, where appropriate, with University policies and the Framework for Higher Educational Qualifications (FHEQ), and to meet the standards set out in the QAA's benchmark statements for music degrees

**11 Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for (subject) (X).

**A-Knowledge and Understanding**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, discipline-related and general key skills in the following areas:

- A1 Cultural approaches to the study of Music
- A2 Issues in historical musicology
- A3 Interdisciplinary applications and theoretical approaches relevant to the study of Music
- A4 Samples from musical repertoires of many kinds (including classical, popular, world musics)
- A5 Musical processes and structures

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding is lectures. These are supplemented by seminars and/or tutorials where students are able to check their learning through discussion and through practice. Students are taught material through independent reading and listening, with close reading of set texts and close listening to set pieces often required preparation for lectures and seminars. In some cases learning is also peer-assisted by means of student study groups which focus on a lecture or seminar assignment. A4 and A5 require workshops, rehearsals and 1:1 teaching, whereas independent study includes practice and composition.

**Assessment Strategy**

Essay and project assignments, seen exam papers, take-away exam papers, individual assignments for lectures, seminars, etc.

**B-Intellectual Skills**

On completing the programme students will have acquired the following:

- B1 the ability to evaluate evidence from different sources
- B2 the ability to present coherent arguments and an independent viewpoint
- B3 analytical powers
- B4 critical skills (e.g. awareness of ideologies, the culturally mediated nature of knowledge)
- B5 the ability to understand and handle non-verbal knowledge and thinking

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

These are acquired and developed in all the expected forums: lectures, seminars and tutorials. Individual module descriptions give more precise details.

**Assessment Strategy**

Essay and project assignments, seen exam papers, take-away exam papers, individual assignments for lectures, seminars, etc.

<b>C-Practical Skills</b>
<p>Graduates will have developed skills in at least two of the following areas (with at least one pursued as a specialism accounting for one third of their final stage):</p> <p>C1 Performance (instrumental, vocal or DJ)  C2 Composition (score based)  C3 Composition (electronically based)  C4 Musicological Research skills</p> <p>Additionally, graduates will have acquired the following:</p> <p>C5 Harmony and aural skills  C6 Music-analytical skills  C7 Applied musical skills (e.g. arranging skills, studio skills, direction/production skills, music editing skills, music business skills)</p>
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
<p>C1 is taught primarily through 1:1 instrumental or vocal lessons, and is supported by periodic workshops on issues such as musical interpretation and performance practice. There is also a requirement to participate in at least one band or ensemble.</p> <p>At stage 3 C2 and C3 are taught through a mixture of lectures (demonstrating relevant techniques and approaches) and seminars / tutorials, where students discuss applications of these to their own creative projects. A large measure of independent production is assumed between sessions. In the final stage, students are given freer rein to define their own projects, and these are discussed largely in 1:1 tutorials, supported by group sessions.</p> <p>Musicological research skills (C4) are inculcated through all musicologically based modules. More specifically, at both stages students can pursue at least one historical-cultural option, taught by seminar, which considers recent research in the relevant field, and requires students to undertake a short, independently conducted research project following these examples. Additionally, sessions dealing with such matters as bibliographic IT applications (databases etc.) are laid on through the Robinson Library. In their final stage, students have the option of undertaking a dissertation, supported by 1:1 tutorials and seminars.</p>
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
<p>As <b>A</b> above. Plus performances, and portfolios of compositions and assignments.</p>
<b>D Transferable/Key Skills</b>
<p>On completing the programme students will have acquired the following:</p> <p>D1 Research skills  D2 communication through the written word  D3 communication through the spoken word  D4 public presentation  D5 time management  D6 computer and technological literacy  D7 independent learning  D8 team work</p>

### Teaching and Learning Methods

For D1 (musicological research) see the paragraph on C4 above.

D2 is practised across the board in ways relevant to each module, such as coursework assignments. Some modules offer the opportunity to submit work-in-progress on a formative, not-for-assessment basis. Additional support is given through the Study Skills activity, which is compulsory to all incoming students and also offered at other stages on a voluntary basis.

D3 & D4: seminars, tutorials and peer study groups are typical forums in which oral communication skills are informally practiced. For musicians oral communication is also particularly important in rehearsals; and public performance is very much a fact of life for many of them. Additionally, final stage students are required to make a formal presentation in the Finalists' Conference, on their specialist study.

D5: a seminar on time-management is offered as part of the study skills programme. Music students develop time management skills *de facto*, in order to balance a busy regime of classes, rehearsals, independent study, and practice on their instrument or voice.

D6: induction week session; special sessions offering training on use of bibliographic databases (RILM, Web of Science etc.). Many students also pursue specifically musical IT applications (including music notation software, sequencing packages), taught in lectures and seminars.

D7: Generally (as is typical for an Arts degree) a high a proportion of individual preparation time to class contact time is assumed: students are ultimately expected to be responsible for their own learning. More specifically, opportunities are provided for individual project work –for example, in Historical–Cultural options, in which a small research project related to material studied on the module forms the main part of the assessment. At least one third of students' final stage is devoted to a specialist study, which is conducted largely through independent learning, with intermittent supervisions or vocal/instrumental lessons.

D8: students frequently work together in workshops, rehearsals and peer study-groups, and are often required to produce a collaborative response to seminar assignments.

### Assessment Strategy

D1, D2: see A above.

D3 & D4: public instrumental or vocal recital at final stage; or presentation at Finalists' Conference.

D5: indirectly assessed (it's usually fairly obvious how well a student has managed their time).

D6: all students are required to produce word-processed essays, and to demonstrate internet literacy as part of their research assignments. Students engaged in electronically based composition submit their work on minidisc or CD. Many students present score-based compositional work using IT packages such as Sibelius and Finale.

D7: students can take at least one Historical-Cultural option at each stage, which in most cases is assessed through an independently conducted research project. Students must take at least one Specialist Study, where the emphasis is primarily on independent learning.

D8: not directly assessed.

<b>12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features</b>
<b>Basic structure of the programme</b>
<p>The programme begins at Stage 3, when you study various aspects of music in contemporary culture, with an emphasis on 'contemporary' in the widest possible sense. We encourage creative exploration in performance, composition and song writing, in combination with critical, intellectual engagement.</p> <p>At Stage 4 you will take a major specialist study (40 credits) in an area of particular interest to you, and may, with permission, also take a minor specialist study (20 credits) in another disciplinary area of interest to you. These are assessed through a portfolio of compositional work, a dissertation, project or live public performance. You also study music and cultural theory, and further optional modules chosen from the wide selection available (see information for the BA in Music). You have the opportunity to work on contemporary music outside of the mainstream, and to develop original and imaginative approaches to your work on a course that recognises the diverse and often unorthodox nature of contemporary musical practice.</p>
<b>Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)</b>
<p>Students generally specialise in some form of contemporary music performance or composition, ranging from acoustic singer-songwriters through to extremely experimental electronic forms. Strong emphasis is placed on creativity, artistic risk-taking and experiment. Students are encouraged to look beyond formulaic commercial music forms, and to engage with more exploratory contemporary ways of making music.</p>
<b>Programme regulations (link to on-line version)</b>
<p><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs</a></p>

<b>13 Criteria for admission</b>
<p><i>Entry qualifications</i></p> <p>BTEC Higher National Diploma in popular music or music production at Pass grade, to include at least three distinctions, which should be from the areas of composition, songwriting, improvisation, studio production and/or performance.</p> <p>Music Foundation Degree: A minimum final year average of 65% in a Foundation Degree where the curriculum topics provide suitable preparation for this programme.</p> <p><i>Admissions policy/selection tools</i></p> <p>Some applicants may be interviewed, depending on prior qualifications, evidence of performance ability on the UCAS form, and experience.</p> <p><i>Non-standard Entry Requirements</i></p> <p><i>Additional Requirements</i></p> <p><i>Level of English Language capability</i></p>

## 14 Support for Student Learning

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

### *Induction*

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc.

There is a comprehensive programme of induction centred around week zero, but continuing wherever appropriate throughout Stage One. This induction includes:

- group and individual tutorials with DPD and/or personal tutor;
- allocation to a Stage-Two or Stage-Three undergraduate 'student mentor';
- detailed campus tour, given by student mentor;
- instruction in the use of Blackboard (and a mini-assignment designed to induce good BlackBoard usage);
- an introductory 'Reading Music' seminar with personal tutor;
- careers service presentations;
- presentations by visiting speakers as appropriate (e.g. Musicians' Benevolent Fund).

### *Study skills support*

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

ICMuS provides first class Study Skills support, by way of an uncredited (but mandatory) Study Skills course, provided by the Study Skills tutor. Subjects covered include:

- good note-taking;
- summarising printed articles and chapters;
- footnotes and bibliographies;
- time management.

### *Academic support*

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Within their general academic studies, students have extensive access to module leaders, whether by way of 1:1 tutorial or in small groups.

Mid-way through the academic year (usually at the end of January), students attend a Module Fair, at which the following academic year's menu of modules is advertised and, immediately following which, initial module choices are made following discussion with personal tutors.

The following provide essential information by way of academic support:

- ICMuS Undergraduate Handbook (extensively revised in 2006);
- School web site;
- Student e-mail and direct access to DPD and tutorial staff;
- Direct access to named contacts in the Careers Service.

### *Pastoral support*

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. Stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Union Society operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

### *Support for students with disabilities*

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

### *Learning resources*

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

The Robinson Library, now houses the (quondam) Music Department Collection of books, journals, recordings and scores in addition to its own holdings.

Teaching resources include high-specification teaching spaces within ICMuS (with keyboards, interactive white-boards, data projection and sound).

In addition to generic IT resources across campus, subject-specific IT facilities include Sibelius (on PC clusters and on RAS), sound studios within ICMuS, and a PC suite in ICMuS's student common room.

Performing resources are available by way of practice rooms, band rehearsal studios, auditorium (King's Hall).

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

## **15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

### *Module reviews*

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Board of Studies and/or the School Teaching and Learning Committee. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

### *Programme reviews*

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. The FTLC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the University Teaching and Learning Committee.

#### *External Examiner reports*

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

#### *Student evaluations*

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

#### *Mechanisms for gaining student feedback*

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

#### *Faculty and University Review Mechanisms*

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a two-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Teaching and Learning Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further five year period.

#### *Accreditation reports*

n/a

## **16 Regulation of assessment**

#### *Pass mark*

The pass mark is 40 (Undergraduate programmes)

#### *Course requirements*

Progression is subject to the University's Undergraduate Progress Regulations (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/ugcont.pdf>) and Undergraduate Examination Conventions (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/ugexamconv.pdf>). In summary, students must pass, or be deemed to have passed, 120 credits at each Stage. Limited compensation up to 40 credits and down to a mark of 35 is possible at each Stage and there are resit opportunities, with certain restrictions.

#### *Weighting of stages*

Stage 3 and Stage 4 results are weighted at 1/3 and 2/3 respectively

#### *Common Marking Scheme*

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Undergraduate Examination Conventions, namely

	<b>Honours</b>	<b>Non-honours</b>
<40	Fail	Failing
40-49	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70+	First Class	Excellent



*Role of the External Examiner*

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:

- See and approve examination papers
- Moderate examination and coursework marking
- Attend the Board of Examiners
- Report to the University on the standards of the programme

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/>)

The School Brochure (contact [es@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:es@ncl.ac.uk))

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs>)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.