

Music

Essentials

Taught programme

MA degree

Music and Sonic Media

Research programmes

MPhil, PhD Musical Composition

MPhil, PhD Music

MPhil, PhD Music Theatre

Admissions requirements

For information on overseas qualifications that meet the admissions requirements, refer to pages 156-157

MA

A first- or upper second-class undergraduate honours degree in music, theatre, sonic arts, or audio-visual media. Applicants with relevant professional experience will also be considered on an individual basis

MPhil and PhD

Normally a Masters degree or equivalent professional experience in a subject related to your chosen area of research. Applicants wishing to take the Composition option must produce evidence of compositional ability

English language requirements

IELTS 6.5, with not less than 6.5 in Writing and 6.0 in the other sections. Internet TOEFL with 92 overall, with 21 in Listening, 22 in Reading, 24 in Speaking and 25 in Writing. For more information and alternative English language requirements, refer to page 156

Fees

Refer to pages 158-159 for information on fees

Further information

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- In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 95 per cent of our music research was rated as internationally recognised or higher, and 65 per cent rated as world leading or internationally excellent.

- Sussex is ranked among the top 15 universities in the UK for music in *The Complete University Guide 2011-12* and *The Times Good University Guide 2012*.

- The Department of Music is a major international centre for the study of contemporary music, contemporary musical thinking and music theatre, offering a unique range of interrelated research disciplines.

- We offer expertise in opera and music theatre, analysis and general musicology, studio composition and composition for film and media, allowing you to develop an integrated portfolio of work corresponding to your strengths and interests.

- Our electronic music and recording studios and student digital audio workstations are equipped with superb facilities, and we maintain a substantial library of scores, CDs, and DVDs with private listening facilities. These are in addition to the collections in the main University Library.

Taught programme

MA in Music and Sonic Media 1 year full time/2 years part time

This programme explores developments in music and sound practices through creative and critical routes. You engage with the practice and theory of music and creative sound work, placing contemporary artistic practices in new music and sonic art in a wider cultural context.

You follow an integrated set of courses examining the borders between musical composition, composing music for visual media, sonic art, performance, and sound and musical installations.

Theory and practice in combination are vital because they enable us to form connections between the diversity of current practices including composition, site-specific and networked sonic events, composing for new media and film, and live performances of all kinds. Creative work is stimulated by workshops by visiting professional musicians, as well as by showcase events organised by students themselves with the support of the Department.

This MA is taught by faculty with strong interests and considerable experience in these areas (refer to Faculty research interests on page 130) and the Music Department in the School of Media Film and Music offers superb facilities (refer to Specialist facilities on page 130).

The Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts at Sussex will provide an opportunity for you to show your work at the end of your degree. Visit www.sussex.ac.uk/acca

Career opportunities

This programme emphasises and encourages skills in technology, communication, IT, evaluation, analysis, collaboration and organisation, and will enable you to go on to compose, conduct, arrange, perform, produce, record, engage in sound design and work in many different ways in the creative music and performance sectors. This MA will also give you the skills to go on to do research; teaching including schools, FE and HE lecturing; arts administration; broadcasting; writing; music journalism; writing music for video games; and running your own music production companies.

Programme structure

Autumn term: you take Sound Environments, and choose one option from a list that may include: Expanded Media: Forms and Practices • Interactive Media Practice and Theory • Media Theory and Research I • Music and the Media of Performance.

Spring term: you take Composing Media, and choose one option from a list that may include: Composition • Computer Music • Media Theory and Research II • New Developments in Digital Media.

Summer term and vacation: extended project. You complete a project (typically a creative project or a dissertation) chosen according to your specialist area of interest in consultation with your academic supervisor.

Assessment

For each course, you will be able to choose between submitting a creative project or an essay. You will also submit a supervised extended project.

Research programmes

The main fields in which research supervision is available are musicology, composition and music theatre. For critical, theoretical or historical musicology, we offer supervision in 20th-century and contemporary music, music aesthetics, opera, music and visual media, and other interdisciplinary fields. For music theatre we offer supervision in projects combining creative practice and theory. Composition is undertaken through a portfolio of compositions, and we offer supervision in electronic and electro-acoustic music, and music for visual media and theatre, as well as instrumental music.

Recent thesis titles

French musical aesthetics from Wagner to the Ballets-Russes

Musical alterity and embodied practice (theory/practice)

Temporality in post-tonal music

The representation of animals in music theatre (theory/practice)

Career opportunities

Our graduates have gone on to pursue careers in teaching, publishing, professional composition, performance, music management and digital media.



Specialist facilities

Music library

The music library is a working collection of records, CDs, videos and scores (mainly devoted to 19th- and 20th-century music) as well as the Altman-Koss Jazz video archive located along with collections belonging to the Departments of Media and Film, and Art History.

Music Mac lab

We have a dedicated lab for Music students only, comprising 11 Mac Pro computers for audio and visual processing, each with MBox mini sound interfaces for use with Pro Tools LE, and controller keyboard. Each Mac Pro runs Logic Pro (audio sequencer software), Sibelius (notation programme), Final Cut Studio, Peak Pro, Max/MSP (for audio tools and sound synthesis), plus various specialist applications supplied by IRCAM (including AudioSculpt and Open Music). Each machine also provides access to internet audio and visual material, as well as deskpace and the facility to playback DVDs and CDs from the music library.

Electronic music studio

The electronic music studio features a control room with connections (24 channels) to two spacious live rooms either side.

- Pro Tools HD based recording system with digital control surface
- software: Pro Tools and Logic Pro
- Mackie desk (24 channels)
- various outboard microphone pre-amps and compressors (Focusrite, Drawmer 1960) and effects units (Lexicon, Fireworx, etc)
- microphones include AKG condensers and Shure dynamic mics.

Drama studio

The Department of Music, in conjunction with Drama in the School of English, operates a fully equipped drama studio for music and drama students.

Musical instruments

Our own teaching and recital room has a Steinway grand piano and A/V equipment, as well as practice rooms, each with its own piano, and can be used by music students at any time.

Other specialist facilities

We also possess a large percussion collection. For first-study pianists, the Steinway Concert Grand and the Kawai Grand in the Meeting House are available. In addition, the Meeting House has a Grant, Degens and Rippen pipe organ.

Academic activities

We organise regular research seminars to which external speakers are often invited, and Sussex faculty and postgraduate students also present their own papers. Recent research seminar series themes have included 'The Voice in Modernity' and 'The Future of Musical Hermeneutics'. Our termly composers' concerts given by the University of Sussex 21st-Century Ensemble provide an ideal opportunity for graduate students to hear their works performed. Members of the Brighton-based professional new music group Tacet visit to give workshop and concert performances of pieces by graduate composers, and ensembles and soloists are regularly invited to give concerts, workshops and master classes. These have included flautist Rowland Sutherland, pianists Richard Casey, Philip Thomas and Andrew Zolinsky, EXAUDI, Orkest De Erepijs, [rout] and members of the London Sinfonietta.

Faculty research interests

Research in the Department of Music is organised around three main areas:

- composition
- critical musicology
- opera and music theatre.

Much of our research is interdisciplinary, involving collaboration between these areas as well as with other subject areas at Sussex (in particular media theory and practice, film theory and practice, drama and informatics).

Our research groups are well funded from a variety of sources and have specialist facilities and resources.

Composition

This group engages in research through practical composition in acoustic, electro-acoustic, electronic/computer and film music media. Works are regularly performed and produced at a variety of prestigious international venues from major opera houses and concert platforms to state-of-the-art electronic venues such as IRCAM, contemporary music festivals and international film festivals.

Critical musicology

Critical theory and interdisciplinary research methods underpin the critical thinking about music undertaken at Sussex, which focuses in particular on the sociology and aesthetics of 20th-century and contemporary music, although research sometimes engages also with the historical interpretation of music in other centuries.

Opera and music theatre

The Centre for Research in Opera and Music Theatre (CROMT) (www.sussex.ac.uk/cromt) focuses on issues of music theatre (eg theories and practices of opera, experimental music theatre and related multimedia forms). The Centre's activities involve historical research into opera and music theatre, and both critical thinking about, and practice-based research in, these forms, often in collaboration with partner institutions in the Sussex region (eg Glyndebourne Opera) and elsewhere in the UK and Europe. CROMT also organises seminars, symposia and conferences on opera and music theatre.

Individuals' research interests are briefly described below. For more information, visit www.sussex.ac.uk/mfm

Professor Martin Butler 20th-century compositional techniques; improvisation and performance skills; popular music of Europe and America; opera composition; music theatre.

Nick Collins computer music including interactive music systems and realtime machine listening, audiovisual performance, electronic music history and analysis, music theory.

Ed Hughes composition; experimental and avant-garde film music; opera and film.

Nicholas McKay Music theory; analysis; linguistics and semiotics of music; 20th-century music; Stravinsky; aesthetics.

Professor Sally Jane Norman Director of the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts; theatre architectures; scenography and sound; multimedia installations; interactive systems and 'live' arts.

Professor Nicholas Till Director of CROMT. Research in contemporary and historical opera and music theatre; director of Post-Operative Productions; modernism/postmodernism; Mozart.