

## Programme Specification for *MA Songwriting*

This programme is only offered at: **ICMP London** as a full-time or part-time degree.

<b>Final award</b>	MA
<b>Intermediate awards available</b>	PG Cert, PG Dip
<b>UCAS code</b>	TBC
<b>Details of professional body accreditation</b>	N/A
<b>Relevant QAA Benchmark statements</b>	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Masters Degree Characteristics QAA Undergraduate Subject benchmarks for music were referenced and extrapolated
<b>UEL Academic School</b>	Arts and Digital Industries
<b>Date specification last up-dated</b>	N/A

<b>Location</b>	<b>Which elements?</b>	<b>Taught by UEL staff</b>	<b>Taught by local staff</b>	<b>Method of Delivery</b>
The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance (ICMP)	The whole programme is taught at ICMP only.	No	Yes	Full-time and Part-time

# Profile

## The summary - UCAS programme profile

### BANNER BOX

The MA Songwriting is a practice-based programme, placing your development as a songwriter in a rigorous critical and contextual setting. Working in a peer community, with teaching and support from industry practitioners and academics, you will explore and refine your creative output and goals, considering artist, commercial and intellectual outcomes.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants would normally have a good honours degree, (upper second or first), or equivalent professional experience; in case of the latter, applicants would be required to submit appropriate evidence of achievements (this should be discussed with an Admissions Advisor).

Applications will be assessed through a two-stage process;

#### Part 1

Candidates to submit one hard copy of each of:

- Completed application form
- Personal Statement
- 2 references (including one from undergraduate institution where appropriate)

#### Part 2

Successful candidates from Part 1 are invited to attend an interview and audition.

This programme is generally suitable for BA Songwriting graduates, BA Music graduates who have studied Songwriting as part of their programme and established Industry Practitioners.

Applicants must demonstrate an appropriate level of music, harmony and theory, production and / or performance skills as relevant to their prospective major repertoire project.

At the ICMP we are committed to working together to build a learning community founded on equality of opportunity - a learning community which celebrates the rich diversity of our student and staff populations. Discriminatory behaviour has no place in our community and will not be tolerated. Within a spirit of respecting difference, our equality and diversity policies promise fair treatment and equality of opportunity for all. In pursuing this aim, we want people applying for a place at the ICMP to feel valued and know that the process and experience will be transparent and fair and no one will be refused access on the grounds of any protected characteristic stated in the Equality Act 2010.

## **ABOUT THE PROGRAMME**

### **What is MA Songwriting?**

MA Songwriting is a highly creative programme designed to enable students to develop, explore and focus both their practical songwriting and conceptual and analytical skills. Students focus on creative exploration, songwriting exercises and academic research around the subject prior to either the creation of a new major repertoire work or a dissertation in the area of song.

ICMP was the first private college to offer degree education for popular musicians in the UK, and has been offering innovative courses to students of popular music for over 25 years. It continues to be at the forefront of these educational developments, providing songwriters and musicians with a university education that inspires and equips them to succeed.

There is a strong, diverse and inclusive community around the ICMP Songwriting department which includes successful songwriter events, part-time courses and exchange trips with Nashville, USA and Sweden among others.

The MA Songwriting programme is validated by the University of East London (UEL) and taught by ICMP.

## Programme structure

### Full-time pathway

Semester A	Creative Process (30 Credits)	Musical Language in Songwriting (30 Credits)
Semester B	The Writer's Voice (30 Credits)	Songwriting Musicology (30 Credits)
Semester C	Major Repertoire Project OR Dissertation Project (60 Credits)	

### Part-time pathway

	Year 1	Year 2
Semester A	Creative Process (30 Credits)	The Writer's Voice (30 Credits)
Semester B	Musical Language in Songwriting (30 Credits)	Songwriting Musicology (30 Credits)
Semester C	n/a	Major Repertoire Project OR Dissertation Project (60 Credits)

## Learning environment

The ICMP is based in bespoke music teaching facilities in north west London, designed to be physically accessible, fully conducive to the learning experience, and comprising the following:

- Live performance studios;
- Specialist teaching rooms;
- Apple technology suites;
- Two Recording studios with control and live rooms
- performance rooms;
- Lecture rooms;
- The Learning Resource Centre;
- Keyboard suites;
- Drum practice booths;
- A furnished student area with wifi and vending machines.

All of these facilities are available to you outside of timetabled hours.

As an added benefit to you, ICMP has a long-standing practice of inviting industry professionals to talk to the student body via masterclasses. These masterclasses provide a unique opportunity for you to learn from external specialists that do not traditionally engage in higher education.

This one-year intensive or two year part-time programme is delivered through a balance of small group lectures, small group writing workshops, and individual writing tuition and feedback sessions. These sessions are designed to offer you creative freedom and focus, enable you to develop your creative ideas in a workshop environment with a small trusted group of peers. Throughout your studies you will be taught and guided by a dedicated and experienced team of expert songwriting tutors and academics, all of whom are actively working as songwriting practitioners and/or researchers.

The programme allows you to tailor your work and study to fit with your specific writing approach (studio based writing, lyrical starting points, musical starting points, conceptual starting points etc).

The London location and the fact that our team are active practitioners within the existing UK music scene, means that your work will be constantly and appropriately critiqued as you develop.

The ICMP understands the commitment that you are making to your future, and we are equally committed to creating the best environment and conditions for you to undertake your studies. We work in close partnership with some of the greatest names in the music industry to provide you with access to a wide range of professional equipment and opportunities.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is a fundamental part of the student learning experience, and is the general description for a set of processes which measure the success of a student's learning. The MA Songwriting complies with UEL's Assessment Policy, which seeks to:

- Actively promote student success and academic achievement
- Provide clear, accurate, accessible information and guidelines to all staff and students on assessment
- Maximise the potential for consistency and fairness in assessment
- Locate assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning process

All modules are individually assessed through a variety of means, including: performances, recording portfolios, practical exams, paper exams, presentations, essays, reflective commentaries, workbooks and projects.

Students with disabilities and/or particular learning needs should discuss assessments with the Programme Leader to ensure they are able to fully engage with all assessment within the programme and that any reasonable adjustment can be agreed in advance.

## **Work experience/placement opportunities**

Being located in London enables you to learn from a staff of leading educators and top professional musicians, who have contributed to the development of a performance-led curriculum in line with the demands of the modern Music Industry. Our London location also offers you the opportunity to interact and network with professional musicians throughout the programme. There are a wide variety of musical activities in which to engage, and opportunities to work in professional settings. There are also numerous informal opportunities for you to work with professional musicians throughout the programme and via the Hub.

The Hub is a team dedicated to providing industry and careers services, which has been designed to support and enhance your learning, and highlight professional opportunities through a wide range of ongoing activities. The Hub provides careers and artist development opportunities from the moment a student enrolls. All of the Hub's career support, information, advice and guidance is underpinned by the ICMP curriculum and specifically tailored to students' needs. This partnership with the Music Industry supports our students' transition from the classroom into their chosen profession.

## **Added value**

By studying at the ICMP you will be in a highly creative environment, with many hundreds of other like-minded students. You will find this a highly stimulating, exciting and vibrant environment! Moreover, as the ICMP is located in London, the heart of the UK music industry, this provides students with unrivalled opportunities to experience and interact with all aspects of the music industry.

The Songwriting Department at ICMP provides an enviable, wide and diverse active Songwriting community, including award-winning and No. 1 hit-writing Songwriting tutors, highly successful

Songwriting graduates, part-time Students, the UK Chapter of the Nashville Songwriting Association International, BASCA and ASCAP and our busy monthly Songwriters' Circle which attracts a large audience to hear named guest artists, current students and alumni. You can apply to play at this event as well as use it as your monthly networking opportunity.

## **BASCA Partnership**

BASCA Ordinary Membership is included in your course fee. Benefits include access to their online resources and free attendance at 20–30 events per year at their prestigious headquarters in London, including masterclasses, networking events and song critiques. You also benefit from their insurance package and their pro bono specialist lawyers for legal advice on Songwriting.

## **IS THIS THE PROGRAMME FOR ME?**

**This is the programme for you if you are interested in...**

- Exploring and expanding your creative process in songwriting
- The relationship between creativity and commerciality in songwriting
- Joining and networking with the world of Songwriting in and around London
- Academic study in songwriting

**If you enjoy...**

- Analysing your own and other peoples songwriting material in a small group
- Pushing your creative boundaries
- Exploring your individual creative voice
- Creative collaboration

**If you want to...**

- Write your first major work which meets your own creative expectations as a songwriter
- Embark on a new repertoire project
- Join the London Songwriting scene and establish yourself in a supportive creative community
- Push your songwriting career to the next level and fully establish your professional practice
- Fully investigate the philosophy, ethos, intellectual and academic world around song

## **Your future career**

As well as developing your skills as a songwriter and artist, the programme will also provide you with the opportunity to raise your skill level in analysis and the critical commentary around songwriting, allowing you to explore and access numerous additional aspects to your profession, such as; collaborative songwriting, songwriting and music education, songwriting academia and research, community songwriting and music journalism.

Successful graduates would be expected to sustain career progression within the industry and adjunctive disciplines. Typically, these would include:

- Independent or Signed Singer / Songwriter
- Independent or Signed Writer / Producer
- Songwriting Academic / Tutor
- Role within a Music Publishing or Music Licensing Organisation
- Songwriting or Music Journalist

In addition, this programme will enable students to develop and lead a range of Songwriting or Music Community Projects, either for themselves or with groups and organisations like charities and local government.

## **How we support you**

You are fully supported throughout your programme by professional and experienced personnel from both the ICMP and the University of East London. Members of ICMP staff provide day-to-day advice on a wide range of practical matters, including accommodation, learning resources, library access, career development and general wellbeing. In addition you have access to the extensive support services provided by the University, including advice regarding study skills development, library and learning resources, and low cost access to sports and fitness facilities.

As an ICMP student you are allocated a personal tutor throughout your time of study on the programme.

A wide variety of professional musicians are involved in the delivery of the programme. You learn from an experienced and committed faculty of leading educators and top professional musicians. This ensures that you are able to interact and network with professional musicians and experienced industry practitioners throughout the programme. Importantly, there are a wide variety of musical activities in which to engage, including showcase events and public performance opportunities, and opportunities to work in professional settings.

## **Bonus factors**

There are a wide variety of musical activities in which to engage, and opportunities to work in professional settings. There are also numerous informal opportunities for you to work with professional musicians throughout the programme and via the Hub.

The monthly songwriters circle mentioned above has slots reserved for Masters Students to apply to play. This is a great showcase for your talent, attended by industry scouts and frequented by big name industry guests meaning you can add an excellent support slot to your CV and gain invaluable playing experience.

One of the most exciting parts of the student experience at the ICMP is the regularly scheduled programme of masterclasses. The ICMP has a long-standing policy of inviting industry professionals to talk to the student body through these events, providing a unique opportunity for you to learn from external specialists.

## **Outcomes**

## **Programme aims and learning outcomes**

The MA Songwriting is a course with a finely tuned balance between theory and practice, in that you will study the context and critique of Songwriting, whilst producing a compositional project of your choice in London. The creative focus of the course is designed to be highly exploratory, allowing students to fully examine and refocus their creative goals, whilst understanding and realigning those goals with a comprehensive insight into the commercial realities of professional songwriting.

### **What is this programme designed to achieve?**

The principle aims of the programme are:

1. to develop and nurture your advanced songwriting practice
2. to develop your individual creative voice
3. to equip you with skills for self-directed exploratory research (in songwriting)
4. to identify and engage with the professional application of creative practice

### **What will you learn?**

#### **Subject Knowledge & Understanding (Intellectual Skills)**

On completion of this programme, you will be able to:

1. understand your professional creative process for songwriting
2. engage in detailed research for your own unique project/s
3. demonstrate the ability to analyse and critique different songwriting methods and content

#### **Thinking Skills**

On completion of this programme, you will be able to:

1. evaluate, consider and understand how to adapt creative processes for professional songwriting projects
2. develop, critique and justify your creative voice for different professional songwriting projects

#### **Subject Specific Skills**

On completion of this programme, you will be able to:

1. confidently and competently create new song content across different genres
2. individually and collaboratively create and develop new song content for different and unique creative projects at a professional level
3. understand, develop and apply an individual creative voice to new song content for professional projects

## **Skills for Life (general skills)**

On completion of this programme, you will be able to:

1. identify, explore and develop new concepts and apply these to large scale creative projects
2. reflect on, evaluate and apply your own professional creative process
3. critically reflect and comment upon large scale professional songwriting projects

## **Structure**

### **The programme structure**

#### **Introduction**

All programmes are credit-rated against the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) to help you understand the amount and level of study that is needed.

One credit is equal to 10 hours of study time (this includes everything you do e.g. lecture, seminar and private study).

Credits are assigned to one of 5 levels:

**Level 4:** Equivalent in standard to the first year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme

**Level 5:** Equivalent in standard to the second year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme

**Level 6:** Equivalent in standard to the third year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme

**Level 7:** Equivalent in standard to a Masters degree

**Level 8:** Equivalent in standard to Doctoral study

#### **Credit rating**

The overall credit-rating of this programme is 180 credits for Masters, 120 credits for PGDip and 60 credits for PGCert.

#### **Typical duration**

The expected duration of this programme is 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time.

It is possible to move from full-time to part-time study and vice-versa to accommodate any external factors such as financial constraints or domestic commitments. Many of our students make use of this flexibility and this may impact on the overall duration of their study period.

## How the teaching year is divided

The teaching year is divided into three trimesters of roughly equal length. A typical student registered in full-time attendance will study two 30-credit modules for trimester A and B, while a typical student registered in part-time attendance will study one 30-credit module for trimester A and B. The Major Repertoire Project or Dissertation occurs in trimester C over the summer period.

This programme will intake in September of each year and will be available full-time over one calendar year or part-time over two calendar years.

## What you will study when

Students will study Exploratory Repertoire and Songwriting Musicology in trimester A and Personal Repertoire and select an Optional Module in trimester B. In the summer period (trimester C) students typically complete their Major Repertoire Project or their Dissertation.

Full-time students complete the programme in one year whilst part-time complete in two.

Level	UEL Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Status
7	PXM ---	Creative Process	30	Core
7	PXM ---	Musical Language In Songwriting	30	Core
7	PXM ---	The Writer's Voice	30	Core
7	PXM ---	Songwriting Musicology	30	Core
7	PXM ---	Major Repertoire Project	60	Option
7	PXM ---	Dissertation	60	Option

## Requirements for gaining an award

In order to obtain a Master of Arts in Songwriting, you will need to obtain 180 credits at FHEQ Level 7. These credits will include a 60-credit level 7 core module of advanced independent research.

## **Masters Award Classification**

Where a student is eligible for a full Masters award the award's classification is determined by calculating the arithmetic mean of all module marks obtained (with all decimal points rounded up to the nearest whole number), to the following grading bands:

70% - 100%	Distinction
60% - 69%	Merit
50% - 59%	Pass
0% - 49%	Not passed

## **Teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Teaching and learning**

Knowledge is developed through:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Individual Tutorials
- Song Demonstrations

Thinking skills are developed through:

- Reading
- Critical analysis and evaluation
- Research
- Reflective critique

Practical skills are developed through:

- Song Demonstrations
- Research
- Presentations

Skills for life and work (general skills) are developed through:

- Song writing
- Presentations
- Writing
- Research
- Attending and performing at events
- Networking and Masterclasses

## **Assessment**

Knowledge is assessed by:

- Song demonstrations
- Seminar presentations
- Songwriting demonstrations

Thinking skills are assessed by:

- Course work
- Song demonstrations
- Seminar presentations
- Research

Practical skills are assessed by:

- Song demonstrations
- Oral and written presentations

Skills for life and work (general skills) are assessed by:

- Song Demonstrations
- Research
- Oral and written presentation

## **How we assure the quality of this programme**

### **Before this programme started**

Before this programme started, the following was checked:

- There would be enough qualified staff to teach the programme;
- Adequate resources would be in place;
- The overall aims and objectives were appropriate;
- The content of the programme met national Level 7 Descriptor requirements (although there are currently none for Music or Songwriting specifically at Masters Level)
- The programme met any professional/statutory body requirements;
- The proposal met other internal quality criteria covering a range of issues such as admissions policy, teaching, learning and assessment strategy and student support mechanisms.

This is done through a process of programme approval, which involves consulting academic experts including some subject specialists from other institutions in the UK and internationally.

## **How we monitor the quality of this programme**

The quality of this programme is monitored each year through evaluating:

- External examiner reports (considering quality and standards)
- Statistical information (considering issues such as the pass rates)
- Student feedback
- Tutor feedback

Drawing on this and other information, programme teams undertake the annual Review and Enhancement Process, which is co-ordinated at School level and includes student participation. The process is monitored by the Quality Standing Committee.

Once every six years an in-depth periodic review of the whole field is undertaken by a panel that includes at least two external subject specialists. The panel considers documents, looks at student work, speaks to current and former students and speaks to staff before drawing its conclusions. The result is a report highlighting good practice and identifying areas where action is needed.

## **The role of the programme committee**

This programme has a programme committee comprising all relevant teaching staff, student representatives and others who make a contribution towards the effective operation of the programme (e.g. library/technician staff). The committee has responsibilities for the quality of the programme. It provides input into the operation of the Review and Enhancement Process and proposes changes to improve quality. The programme committee plays a critical role in the quality assurance procedures.

## **The role of external examiners**

The standard of this programme is monitored by at least one external examiner. External examiners have two primary responsibilities:

- To ensure the standard of the programme;
- To ensure that justice is done to individual students.

External examiners fulfil these responsibilities in a variety of ways including:

- Approving exam papers/assignments;
- Attending assessment boards;
- Reviewing samples of student work and moderating marks;
- Ensuring that regulations are followed;
- Providing feedback through an annual report that enables us to make improvements for the future.

The external examiner reports for this programme are located on the UEL virtual learning environment (Moodle) on the school notice board under the section entitled 'External Examiner Reports & Responses'. External examiner reports can also be accessed under the Quality

Assurance and Enhancement section of ICMP's internal virtual learning environment. You can also view a list of the external examiners for the UEL School by clicking on the link below.

<http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminersystem/currentexaminers/>

### **Listening to the views of students**

The following methods for gaining student feedback are used on this programme:

- Module evaluations (e-survey)
- Programme evaluations (e-survey)
- Student representation on Programme Committees (meeting trimesterly)
- Suggestions box

Students are notified of the action taken through:

- Publishing the minutes of the Programme Committee Meeting on the student website
- Providing details on the programme notice board via 'You Said, We Did'

### **Listening to the views of others**

The following methods are used for gaining the views of other interested parties:

- Annual student satisfaction questionnaire
- Questionnaires to former students
- Industry Liaison Panel
- Student Representation
- Suggestions received informally or ad-hoc from staff, teaching faculty, students, alumni and colleagues from other institutions.

### **Where to find further information**

Further information about this programme is available from:

- The UEL web site (<http://www.uel.ac.uk>)
- The student handbook ([www.icmpstudent.co.uk](http://www.icmpstudent.co.uk))
- Module study guides ([www.icmpstudent.co.uk](http://www.icmpstudent.co.uk))
- UEL Manual of General Regulations <http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/>
- UEL Quality Manual <http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/>
- Regulations for the Academic Framework <http://www.uel.ac.uk/academicframework/>
- School web pages ([www.icmp.co.uk](http://www.icmp.co.uk))