

# MASTERS PROGRAMME (MPerf, MComp, MMus)

## Programme Overview

Updated July 2025

The information in this document is relevant to prospective applicants and current students studying for MPerf, MComp and MMus qualifications on the RCM's Masters programme. Some restrictions might apply based on your principal study and your choice of study route.

## Masters Programme Study Routes

The RCM's Masters programme offers two different study routes, which lead to different degree qualifications of equal standard.

The Master of Performance (MPerf) and Master of Composition (MComp) route develops your performance or composition skills to a high professional level through intensive training.

The Master of Music (MMus) route augments MPerf or MComp study with additional research-led modules, which are designed to train your critical, analytical and research skills, as well as your ability to express yourself verbally to a high level. Owing to the additional emphasis on research, the MMus requires an ability to speak and write confidently in English.

## Programme Structure

### Overview

- Principal study in performance or composition (with optional second study), with regular faculty-based workshops, activities, and performance opportunities
- Professional Artist module, supporting your Principal Study and wider professional skills
- MMus core modules, if applicable
- Elective modules

### Programme Credit Framework

All Masters programmes comprise a total of 240 credits, usually taken over two years of 120 credits each.

Most students have 75 credits allocated to Principal Study (or Principal and Second Study split as 60 + 15 credits) and 15 credits to the Professional Artist option. The remaining credits are the MMus Core modules and up to two Elective modules.

	Principal Study	Professional Artist option	MMus Core/ Elective 1	Elective 2
Year 1	75 credits	15 credits	15 credits	15 credits
Year 2	75 credits	15/30 credits	15/30 credits	0/15 credits

**Composition for Screen** and **Vocal & Opera** students have 60 credits allocated to Principal Study and 30 credits allocated to the Professional Artist options:

	Principal Study	Professional Artist option	MMus Core/ Elective 1	Elective 2
Year 1	60 credits	30 credits	15 credits	15 credits
Year 2	60 credits	30 credits	15/30 credits	0/15 credits

### Part-time study

Part-time students will complete a total of 240 credits spread over three academic years. The models below show the ways this can be achieved. The programme of study must be discussed and agreed by the Head of Faculty and Head of Postgraduate Programmes at the start of each year. Part-time study is not available to singers.

	Principal Study	Professional Artist option	MMus Core/ Elective 1	Elective 2
Year 1	50 credits	15 credits	15 credits	
Year 2	50 credits	15/30 credits		
Year 3	50 credits	0 credits (option to audit classes)	15/30 credits to be taken in Year 2 or 3	0/15/30 credits to be taken in any year

### Fast-track study

In some cases, the Master of Music is offered as a full-time, 12-month, fast-track programme, leading to the award of MMus (RCM). Most fast-track programmes are structured as follows:

Principal Study	Professional Artist	MMus Core	Research Project	Elective
105 credits	15 credits	15 credits	30 credits	15 credits

**Composition for Screen** students have 60 credits allocated to Principal Study and 60 credits allocated to the Professional Artist modules:

Principal Study	Professional Artist	MMus Core	Research Project	Elective
60 credits	60 credits	15 credits	30 credits	15 credits

Fast-track study is not available to singers.

## Principal Study

Please see [faculty pages](#) for detailed information on Principal Study.

## Second Study

All students apart from Principal Study Singers are eligible to audition for a Second Study upon request. An audition will normally be required following the submission of options after registration. All Second Studies are subject to the agreement of the relevant Heads of Faculty.

You may also allocate some of your Principal Study hours to unassessed study of a related instrument on an uncredited basis, subject to the agreement of your Head of Faculty.

## Professional Artist modules

All full-time Masters students take at least one Professional Artist module in each year of study. The options available are faculty-specific and offer skills relevant to areas of professional and industry practices.

Most Professional Artist modules incorporate a Professional Portfolio assessment. The portfolio will usually contain two items tailored to reflect your artistic interests and career aspirations.

## MMus Core modules

The Master of Music programme synthesises professional practice, scholarship and research. Students take an MMus core module in each year of the full-time programme, or in the first two years of the part-time programme. Each module interrogates subjects, approaches, materials and methodologies of direct relevance to musicians working across practice and theory.

In the first year, students take either *Critical Portfolio* (performance and composition students) or *Context, Materials and Repertoire Portfolio* (composition for screen students). In the second year, all students take *Research Project*.

*Critical Portfolio* brings performer and composer cohorts together in the first term, increasing opportunities for collaboration. Assessment embraces written and spoken elements with students choosing which tasks to complete for their portfolio.

*Context, Materials and Repertoire Portfolio* enables screen composers to develop contextual awareness, analytical skills and research methods in relation to screen music composition.

In the *Research Project* module, students plan and research an independent project, delivered as either a written project or lecture recital/presentation. You will have a choice to take this module in either a 15-credit or a 30-credit version. This flexibility provides students intending to proceed to doctoral study with the opportunity to complete a more substantial written project.

## Elective modules

Alongside your Principal Study, Professional Artist and MMus Core modules, the programme offers a range of Elective modules. You are encouraged to choose Electives which will develop your range of skills. Please note that elective modules may be subject to change according to student numbers and availability of professors. This list is indicative only, and not all modules run every year.

### Alexander Technique

This module explores the application of Alexander Technique to practice, and processes of decision-making in performance. You will critically observe and analyse your own performance.

### Art of Piano Teaching

Study the theory and practice of teaching the piano in a variety of educational settings.

### Arts in Health and Care

Explore the field of performing arts in health and care. Consider how the performing arts can address specific needs, be effectively implemented in care contexts, and integrated into healthcare systems.

### Aural Analysis

Explore the theory and practice of analysing a broad range of music from an aural perspective, focusing on coherence and expression in form, harmony, melody, tonality, and syntax, as well as practical applications.

### Chamber Music/Chamber Project

Form your own chamber group and receive regular, student-initiated coaching as well as performance opportunities.

### Collections in Practice

In this module you will explore artefacts in the RCM's museum, library and art collections including autograph manuscripts, editions and recordings.

### Composition

Work one-to-one with a tutor to refine your compositional techniques and gain an enhanced understanding of the art, craft and technique of composition.

### Composition for Screen

Work one-to-one with a tutor to refine your compositional techniques and gain an enhanced understanding of the art, craft and technique of screen composition.

### Concerto Performance

Develop a mature interpretation of a substantial concerto in collaboration with a coach and perform a selection in a faculty concert competition.

### Conducting

You will have practical classes on key works, including attention to directing ensemble, rehearsal techniques, comparative interpretations, and developing/communicating personal interpretations.

## **Contemporary Music in Action**

Explore the collaborative process of creating a new work between composer and performer and learn how to articulate in detail the process involved.

## **Continuo**

Learn to accompany a solo performer, using a realised continuo part as a starting point, in a stylistically informed manner appropriate to the national style and period of the work, drawing on historical source material (includes figured bass if relevant).

## **Electronic Music**

You will gain practical training in the use of advanced hardware and software tools in electronic and electroacoustic compositions.

## **Experimental Music**

An introduction to experimental music including open scores, extended techniques and object-based music. You will develop understanding of historical, practical, and aesthetic issues relating to experimental music performance practice.

## **Historical Performance**

Explore a wide range of repertoire from 1600-1900 through projects organised by the Historical Performance department.

## **Improvisation**

Develop improvisation skills on your Principal Study instrument through individualised coaching focussing on technical and theoretical aspects of improvisation. You can choose to focus on baroque, classical, jazz or experimental approaches.

## **Memorising Music**

Learn the theory and practice of memorising music successfully.

## **Music and Dance Collective**

Explore the art of collaboration and create new music and dance works with students from London's leading dance schools.

## **Musicianship & Improvisation**

Explore musicianship and stylistic improvisation skills to an advanced level.

## **Orchestral Performance/Orchestral Musician**

These modules explore core orchestral repertoire, audition skills, sight-reading, sectional skills (including leading, teamwork, playing in a section), and orchestral and professional etiquette.

## **Orchestration Portfolio/Orchestration Project**

These modules explore how to write imaginatively and effectively for orchestra and other large ensembles.

## **Orchestration for Screen**

Develop basic technical skills of effective orchestration for screen media by analysing existing models and considering the creative, aesthetic and practical issues of orchestration.

## **Performance Education**

This module provides insight into fundamental principles of performance education and expertise, as elucidated through current scientific research and educational practice. Drawing on your own experience, you will explore music perception and production and engage directly with implications for learning and teaching.

## **Performers' Health & Wellbeing**

This module explores how physical and mental health can shape how musicians pursue their art. Drawing on recent research into the physical and mental demands of music making, you are encouraged to explore the ways in which musicians meet those demands.

## **Performance Psychology**

This module introduces you to processes and perspectives that define and underpin performance psychology, drawing on interdisciplinary research. You will develop critical and analytical resourcefulness, and gain awareness of the mental skills that facilitate effective practice and successful performance.

## **Practical Teaching Portfolio**

In this module you will develop your teaching practice through self-reflection, self-assessment and guided self-critique. You will discuss current teaching activities with an allocated mentor and observe your mentor and your peers in a teaching situation.

## **Professional Musician**

This module helps you to prepare for a healthy, proactive, and sustainable career in music through individual career coaching, cross-faculty group workshops, and industry knowledge and insights.

## **Professional Project**

This module supports you to develop and deliver a self-directed project with a professional focus. Examples could include curating and presenting a concert in an external venue or festival, developing and pitching a business proposal, or undertaking a project based on an extended work placement.

## **Repetiteur Skills**

This module offers direct experience of accompanying singers in a variety of contexts (e.g. language classes and operatic scenes) a valuable potential career path for Principal Study pianists.

## **Recording Experience**

This module introduces you to the process of classical music recording and performing in the studio. You will gain experience of the roles involved in producing a recording and learn how to prepare a score for editing.

## **Stylistic Composition**

Learn the art and craft of compositional technique in a variety of styles. There are two routes: classical (broadly early baroque to early twentieth century) and jazz.

## Techniques of Analysis

This module explores a range of different technical approaches to analysing a broad range of music, focusing on coherence and expression in form, harmony, melody, tonality, and syntax.

## The Song Pianist

Working alongside a dedicated coach, you will explore the techniques of vocal accompaniment, including rehearsal technique, developing a sense of ensemble, balance, timing and colour, and preparing a performance.

## Women in Music

You will gain understanding of women's role in music, past and present, through a research-based performance project and a professional placement alongside a female mentor.

## Global Conservatoire modules

The Global Conservatoire was launched in May 2021 by the Royal College of Music, the Manhattan School of Music (MSM), the Royal Danish Academy of Music (RDAM), and the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (MDW).

Offering a new and flexible range of online courses set against a rich cultural backdrop, the project will prepare 21st century performers-in-training for a global and digital future. RCM students can elect to take a Global Conservatoire module as one of their Electives.

The design of the Global Conservatoire means that students from the RCM and other conservatoires involved can pick from a diverse range of modules and work at their own pace, even across three different time zones. Students can learn from a global classroom and develop their international networks with students from other conservatoires, without having to leave their home institutions.

Examples of modules include:

- Performers (Back) in the Spotlight (MDW)
- Sound, Music and the Environment (RCM)
- Danish Art Songs in Danish: from Weyse to Carl Nielsen (RDAM)
- Free Improvisation Techniques (CvA)
- The Underrepresented in Opera (MSM)