

MA Music: Performance Practice pathway



The University's new £16m Bramall Music Building offers state-of-the-art facilities for performance, including a custom-built music auditorium, the Elgar Concert Hall. Those wishing to study performance practice post-1800 will benefit from access to these facilities, as well as period-specific resources. For those wishing to study mid- and late-19th Century music, we have an 1851 original Erard piano which can be used for performance of relevant repertoire; and those with an interest in 20th and 21st Century music will have the opportunity to work with the Department's 'Ensemble in Association', the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. Your course features five taught modules and will culminate in a substantial solo recital, with commentary. This pathway focuses on the performance of music post-1800, but we also offer an Early Music Performance Practice pathway

[Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)
 (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>)

Course fact file

Type of Course: Taught

Study Options: Full time, part time

Duration: 1 year full-time; 2 years part-time

Start date: September

Contact

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[School of Languages, Cultures, Art History and Music](/schools/lcahm/index.aspx)

[Department of Music](/schools/lcahm/departments/music/index.aspx)

Details

You will study three core modules:

- Advanced Performance
- Music Research Colloquium
- Introduction to Musicology

You will also choose one optional module and present a substantial solo recital, plus a discursive commentary. The recital offers you the opportunity to unite practical and theoretical musicianship. The performance interpretation should be informed by historical context, and the commentary should establish and discuss the rationale for the interpretation with reference to that context. The recital programme should be built around a particular historical repertory or technique.

Why study this course

You will be taught by our specialists, who embrace an exceptionally wide range of performance practice interests. These include medieval music specialist [Mary O'Neill](/staff/profiles/music/oneil-mary.aspx) (</staff/profiles/music/oneil-mary.aspx>); [Andrew Kirkman](/staff/profiles/music/kirkman-andrew.aspx) (</staff/profiles/music/kirkman-andrew.aspx>), who, besides being director of the critically acclaimed Renaissance vocal ensemble 'The Binchois Consort' has worked on performance-practice projects from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth century; and [Amy Brosius](/staff/profiles/music/brosius-amy.aspx) (</staff/profiles/music/brosius-amy.aspx>), specialist in seventeenth-century Italian vocal music.

Modules

You will study three core modules:

Advanced Performance

This is a module for advanced performers who are approaching a professional standard. Your skills will be honed through individual tuition with experts on your instrument/voice. You will present a lecture-recital involving a performance and a lecture presentation, and submit an extended essay version of the lecture.

Music Research Colloquium

You will attend approximately 14 research seminars, most delivered by invited speakers in the Music Department's research seminar series. Department staff will lead several review sessions. There will be approximately six seminars on library research skills, information retrieval and music-related software.

Introduction to Musicology

This module examines issues that are exercising musicologists in the modern discipline, with a view to preparing you to conduct original research and ultimately prepare you for the profession. It is taught as a series of seminars by various members of staff, each introducing a topic related to their own research expertise.

You will also choose one optional module from the following:

Studies in Performance Practice

This module combines the disciplines of musicology and performance, introducing you to the main topics in performance practice of western music. Case studies are devoted to Baroque, Classical, Romantic and twentieth-century music. The module will instruct develop the skills necessary for the PhD in Performance Practice. Topics covered may include organology, rhythm and tempo, articulation, pitch and temperaments, notation, the history of recorded performance and debates around 'authenticity' in performance.

Special Study in Music

You will undertake a special study of a particular field of your choice under the direction of the leader of your pathway, which will typically require attendance at an appropriate series of lectures or tutorials as well as independent reading and research. Topics for study might include: vocalists in the Baroque era; topics in music analysis; or topics in critical musicology.

Sound in Society

This module provides an introduction to the field of Sound Studies, including both the conceptual framework as well as practical techniques. We will begin with an overview of the field and its formation in 2004 through a consideration of the work of Trevor Pinch, Karin Bijsterveld and R Murray Schafer. Subsequent weeks will cover topics such as: soundscapes; sound and the animal world; noise and silence in philosophy; the engineering of sound; sound and radio art; and synaesthesia research in cognitive psychology.

Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art

This module consists of a critical examination of topics in aesthetics and the philosophy of art. It considers subjects such as: art and the nature of aesthetic experience; beauty, ugliness and the sublime; symbolism and allegory; the aesthetics of modernism. At its core is an overview of the German aesthetic tradition, involving a close reading of foundational texts by Immanuel Kant, Georg Hegel and their contemporaries in the early 19th century. It will also consider work by a range of subsequent authors, such as, for example, Walter Benjamin, John Dewey, Ernst Bloch, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Theodor Adorno and Martin Heidegger. Attention will be paid not only to the conceptual arguments put forward by the thinkers in question, but also to the ways in which their theoretical tenets have underpinned the interpretation and criticism of works of art, music and literature.

Gender and Music

The field of gender studies is a very important area of focus in musicological and ethnomusicological research. This module is divided into two parts: a ten-week seminar on gender studies in general followed by an independent study during which you will apply learned information from the seminar to a chosen essay topic in the discipline of music. The seminar will focus on the interdisciplinary and cross-cultural aspects of gender studies and feminist theories. You will be introduced to a range of theoretical and methodological issues and debates that have characterised the development of gender studies in the twentieth century. You will also be introduced to the ontological, epistemological and methodological issues that arise in feminist scholarship. You will engage with the study of these issues both as analytical categories and approaches within the social sciences. During your independent study, you will meet with an advisor to create an appropriate project that will enable you to apply the general knowledge of gender studies and feminist theories specifically to research in the discipline of music.

Advanced Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music

This module will provide the technical and theoretical background for working in this period and equip you with the skills necessary to proceed to a PhD in Medieval or Renaissance Music. Through a series of case studies, you will be shown a variety of analytical models to provide you with different ways of engaging with the music as well as of talking and thinking about it. You will also examine complex and controversial issues of performance practice.

Fees and funding

We charge an annual tuition fee. Fees for 2015/16 are as follows:

- Home/EU: £7,560 full-time; £3,780 part-time
- Overseas: £15,490 full-time

For part-time students, the above fee quoted is for year one only and tuition fees will also be payable in year two of your programme.

Tuition fees can either be paid in full or by instalments.

Eligibility for Home/EU or Overseas fees can be verified with Admissions. Learn more about [fees for international students \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/International/students/finance/fees.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/International/students/finance/fees.aspx).

Learn more about [postgraduate tuition fees and funding \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/pgt-fees/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/pgt-fees/index.aspx).

Scholarships and studentships

Scholarships to cover fees and/or maintenance costs may be available. To discover whether you are eligible for any award across the University, and to start your funding application, please visit the University's [Postgraduate Funding Database \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx).

International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

Entry requirements

We usually ask for a bachelors degree (2:1), or equivalent.

In addition to the usual supporting documents, you must submit a video-recorded audition (either a DVD or an internet video link, e.g. YouTube/Vimeo/Youku). The audition programme should be at least 20 minutes in duration, with a varied programme focusing on Western classical repertoire specific to the performance practice period you intend to study at Birmingham. If possible, the audition video should include a brief spoken introduction to the programme, discussing - in English - the repertoire you performed.

You must also submit a sample of written work - in English - of at least 1,500 words on a musical topic, with academic bibliography and references.

Learn more about [entry requirements \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx)

International students

Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications; our [country pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx) show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

English language requirements

You can satisfy our English language requirements in two ways:

- by holding an **English language qualification** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx>) to the right level
- by taking and successfully completing one of our **English courses for international students** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx>)

How to apply

Before you make your application

You may wish to **register your interest with us** (<https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate>) to receive regular news and updates on postgraduate life within this Department and the wider University.

Making your application

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the **How to apply pages** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx>)

Apply now (<https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL142.htm>)

Learning and teaching

Your learning will be enhanced by our extensive facilities, including the new **Bramall Music Building** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/bramall/index.aspx>) and the **Barber Music Library** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/libraries/subject/music.aspx>).

You will also become part of, and contribute to, the vibrant international community of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, which offers dedicated research resources and a supportive working environment. Our team of academic and operational staff are on hand to offer support and advice to all postgraduate students within the College.

Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS)** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx>) which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

International students can access support through the **English for International Students Unit (EISU)** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/inseasonal/index.aspx>).

Related research

- **Centre for Early Music Performance and Research (CEMPR) - Music** (</schools/lcahm/departments/music/research/cempr/index.aspx>)

Related staff

Dr Amy Brosius (</staff/profiles/music/brosius-amy.aspx>)

Professor Andrew Kirkman (</staff/profiles/music/kirkman-andrew.aspx>)

Employability

The University of Birmingham has been ranked 8th in the UK and 60th in the world for post-qualification employability in the latest global survey of universities commissioned by the International Herald Tribune.

Your degree will provide excellent preparation for employment and this will be further enhanced by the employability skills training offered through the College of Arts and Law Graduate School.

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest Flash Player](#) [Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

Birmingham's Music postgraduates work in a wide range of careers within and beyond the music world. A postgraduate degree in Music develops a broad base of skills including general skills such as communication, problem solving and research, and also specific skills developed by practice and performance such as self-management, team work and presentation.

Over the past five years, 96% of Music postgraduates were in work and/or further study six months after graduation. Whilst some graduates pursue music-related careers, others choose to use their transferable skills to follow career paths in fields including finance, the media and the public sector. Employers that graduates have gone on to work for include: Arts Council England; BBC; Birmingham Conservatoire; Birmingham Contemporary Music Group; Coventry City Council Performing Arts Service; Lancaster University; National Opera Studio; National Orchestra; Raffles Institution; and Royal Northern College of Music.

Music postgraduate alumni profiles



The amount of experience I've had without a doubt has made me a better conductor.



Joshua Rohde
Doctoral Student of Musical Arts

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/lcahm/departments/music/postgraduate/music-alumni-pg.aspx>

