

## Module Specification

**Module Title:** Contextual Studies 2: Songwriting

<b>Module code:</b>	HBASHR034	<b>NQF level:</b>	Level 5
<b>Credit value:</b>	20 credits	<b>Semester of study:</b>	1 and 2
<b>Applicable pathways:</b>	Classical, Folk, Film Music, Jazz, Popular and Production	<b>Pre-requisites:</b>	None

### Module overview

The module will be divided primarily between three areas; compositional parameters, composition in context, and formalised methods of review.

Compositional parameters will cover aspects of form, lyric, melody and harmony. Key terms will include structural functionality and forms, repetition and variety, functional harmony, figurative language, conjunct and disjunct intervals, tonal stability and harmonic vocabulary. These will be taught theoretically through a mixture of scored and aural examples and students will be encouraged to start exploring these concepts within their own practice.

Composition in context will explore a range of these parameters from diachronic and synchronic perspectives. This might include exploring varied melodic phrase lengths across time, developments and limitations in harmonic language, variety of song form across styles and time and approaches to narrative across different genres.

Throughout the module, students will be required to actively review their own and their peers work using a variety of different frameworks. These may include an analysis of emotional architecture, a consideration of audience identification and relevance, structural efficiency, communicative potential and melodic call back.

### Aims

Songwriting is a specific compositional activity that is generally associated with popular music and normally involves the writing of lyrics. This module allows students from all performance and compositional disciplines to apply their skills to create a portfolio.

The module aims to:

1. Introduce students to the craft of songwriting and to develop their compositional skills in order to realise the creation of a portfolio of songs.
2. Focus on the fundamental properties of song writing.
3. Engage with a mixture of scored and aural analysis in order to observe, hear and understand core compositional techniques in practice.
4. Place equal emphasis on historical and contemporary practice pertaining to popular music composition to ensure students are aware of a range synchronic and diachronic perspectives and approaches.

### Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Compose music that combines specialised and systematic musical knowledge with creative flair and imagination.
2. Compose music that demonstrates a secure technical command of and influence in chosen compositional idiom showing critical awareness of the deployment of compositional parameters.
3. Generate ideas through research and analysis.
4. Apply significant judgement in a broad range of musical contexts, supported by detailed analytical application of harmonic, melodic, rhythmic and social concepts, of key repertoire within its context of style, production and reception.

### Learning and teaching methods

The module will be delivered through sessions that combine **lecture** and **seminar** delivery.

**Lecture.** Key concepts and theories will be introduced through formal taught presentations. Taught content and tasks should lead towards an enhanced understanding of the area and an ability for individual research during private study time to aid the development of coursework.

**Seminar.** Students will take part in a range of discussions, analyses and group exercises to enhance their understanding of each area. Students will also be encouraged to share their unfolding ideas in sessions, and to learn from the development of each other's research.

### Contact hours and directed study (over semesters 1 and 2)

Delivery type	Student hours
Indicative hours for learning and teaching activities	30 hours
Indicative hours of directed study	170 hours
Total hours (100hrs per 10 credits)	200 hours

### Opportunities for formative feedback

Students will receive regular formative feedback, which will be delivered in seminars.

### Assessment Method

Description of assessment	Length/Duration	Weighting	Module LOs addressed
Coursework – 2 song recorded portfolio (1 song will be a topline over a provided backing track, the other will be setting lyrics to music)	5-8 minutes	50%	1, 2, 3, 4
Coursework – 2 song recorded portfolio (1 song will be written as a pitched demo for one of 3 named acts, and the other will be a free original song)	5-8 minutes	50%	1, 2, 3, 4

### Re-Assessment Method

Description of assessment	Length/Duration	Weighting	Module LOs addressed
Coursework – 2 song recorded portfolio (1 song will be a topline over a provided backing track, the other will be setting lyrics to music)	5-8 minutes	50%	1, 2, 3, 4
Coursework – 2 song recorded portfolio (1 song will be written as a pitched demo for one of 3 named acts, and the other will be a free original song)	5-8 minutes	50%	1, 2, 3, 4

### Indicative Reading List

- Pattison, P. (1995) Writing Better Lyrics. New York Writers Digest.
- Perricone, J. (2000) Melody in Songwriting: Tools & Techniques. Boston: Berklee.
- Rooksby, R. (2000) How to write songs on guitar. London: Balafon.
- Zollo, P. (2003) Songwriters on songwriting. Da Capo.
- Cope, D. (2009) Righting Wrongs in Writing Songs. Da Capo Press.