



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

The
Department
Of
Music.

Composition, Sonic Art and Digital Media







Composition, Sonic Art and Digital Media

The opportunities for teaching and research at the cutting edge of 21st-Century creative music practice are greater than ever before. The Department of Music at the University of Sheffield offers a rich range of resources for the composer who wishes to specialise in areas involving either score-based or electroacoustic composition, or to develop a diverse portfolio that combines performance, mixed media, live interaction, computer programming, music theatre, improvisation, installation, ethnomusicology and world musics.

The range of programmes offered, including the MMus in Composition and the MA in Sonic Art and Media Production, are designed to meet individual interests and provide excellent one-to-one creative and technical support.

The department has excellent facilities for the production, performance and publication of work and takes pride in being a leading player in the cultural development of the region as well as promoting its graduate students' work. Regular workshops, research forums and performance opportunities offer additional scope for professional development.

The experimental drive behind composition and sonic art in the department has consistently proven a major attraction for applicants at graduate level. Course tutors, who are published, performed and broadcast worldwide, contribute towards a creative pulse that maintains a fresh perspective and encourages collaboration.

Taught Programmes

MA in Sonic Art and Media Production

The taught MA in Sonic Art and Media Production is a one year full-time course (two years part-time) and focuses upon three areas:

- the acquisition of technical skill in the production of audio and video.
- the creative application of technology to produce artistic works in a variety of media formats.
- the contextualisation of personal work within a broad spectrum of artistic practice.

The programme is suited to the following students:

- those who already possess good technical competence, who wish to continue to investigate creative outputs, perhaps leading to the initial ideas for PhD research.
- those who wish to further understand some of the technical aspects of contemporary sonic/installation/video art.

The programme will combine technical elements (such as programming) with creative practice throughout the year. Modules will be sufficiently flexible to accommodate both technical and non-technical projects and, where appropriate, offer opportunities for collaboration between students.

A significant proportion of the programme will allow the student to create a contrasting portfolio of artistic output and will equip them with IT skills that will make them attractive to



employers in the media and broadcasting industries. Research training programmes will enable the student to become aware of how they might publish their work, contextualise their practice in broader academic terms and progress towards a possible research degree.

The course structure is as follows

- MUS6015: Intermediate Digital Studio (autumn): Credit value 30
- MUS6016: Advanced Digital Studio (spring): Credit value 30
- MUS6017: Creative Media Foundation (autumn): Credit value 30
- MUS6018: Creative Media Portfolio (spring): Credit value 60
- MUS6000: Research Techniques: Credit value 15
- MUS6010: Critique of Research: Credit value 15



The department boasts a thriving performance tradition in contemporary music, including the Sheffield University New Music Ensemble, Sound Junction, and close affiliation with Sonic Arts Network and the Society for the Promotion of New Music.



The two 'digital studio' modules are focused around professional software resources including Max/MSP (cycling74) and the Adobe Creative Suite; they are assessed through a number of assignments; teaching methods include lectures and tutorials.

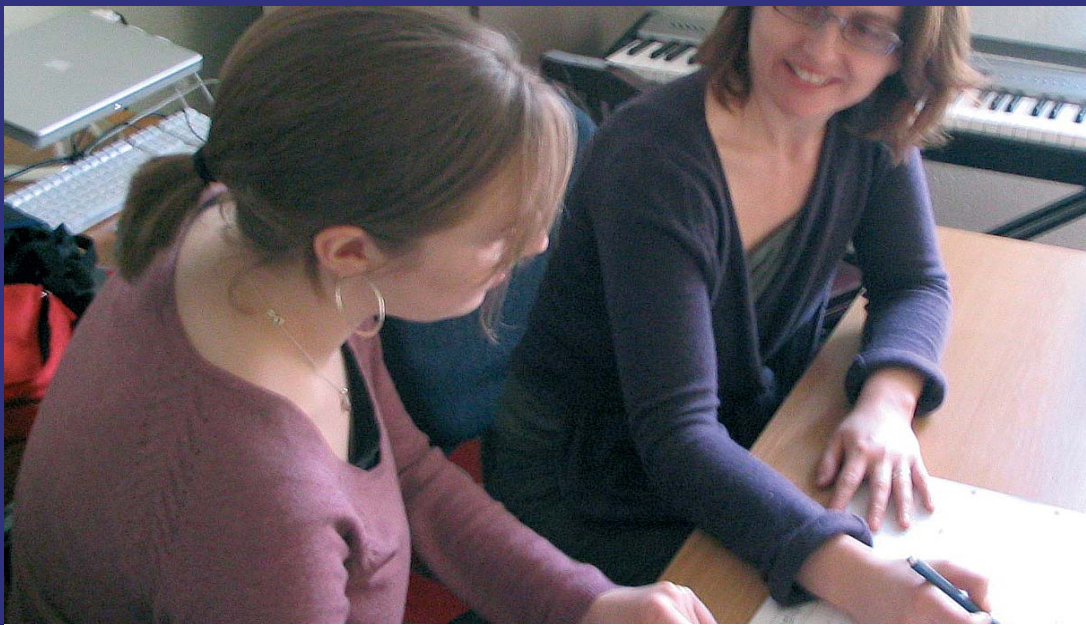
The two 'creative media' modules are focused towards individual creative work and are assessed through portfolio and essay. Teaching methods include group seminars and tutorials. Research training modules develop a broader understanding of research through closer integration with departmental research initiatives.

Research Studies: *Composition*

MMus (one year full-time; two years part-time) Composition Studies Focus

Students taking Composition prepare a 25-30 minute portfolio of original compositions. Tutorial support is provided. During the course the student aims to demonstrate mastery of a range of compositional genres and to explore creative ideas through the medium of original composition. In addition it is hoped that students will understand, build upon and develop their own 'voice' through writing, directing and performing works written for different ensembles. Workshops with local





professional ensembles will enable direct access to highly skilled performers.

In consultation with their supervisor, students select one possible option to accompany composition: performance, dissertation or folio.

- Performance. Students prepare a recital programme of approximately 45 minutes duration. Performance tuition is provided.
- Dissertation. A dissertation of approximately 20,000 words on an original research subject (often selected to support a particular compositional interest). Tutorial support is provided.
- Folio. A collection of smaller pieces of work approved by the student's supervisor. Typically, this involves analytical or editorial work reinforcing the student's compositions. Tutorial support is provided.

MPhil Composition (two years full-time; three to four years part-time)

This degree allows you to concentrate exclusively on composition, leading to a portfolio of original work of about 45 to 60 minutes in duration with accompanying commentary not exceeding 5,000 words. The MPhil track also enables direct transfer to the PhD programme (during the second year, subject to satisfactory progress, presentation and viva interview).

Compositions may be either vocal/instrumental, electroacoustic or a mixture of both. The degree is taught by individual supervision and opportunities will be made wherever possible for public performance of your work.

PhD Composition (three years full-time; up to six years part-time)

The PhD develops out of the MPhil in Composition and is taught in a similar fashion. The final submission is a

substantial folio of between 90 and 120 minutes of music, accompanied by a commentary not exceeding 10,000 words in length.

PhD with Creative Music Technology Research

Given that PhD research in this area may well include performances, installations, audio-video, interactive ensemble pieces, new instrument design, and computer (music) programming, and that students may well wish to theorise more about methodology and current practice, students taking this programme submit a portfolio of creative music technology research and an accompanying thesis of 30,000-40,000 words.

Past research degrees have investigated the following areas:

- Spectral instrumental composition with computer interaction
- Large choral and orchestral works
- Composition with new instruments (with Ethnomusicology)
- Soundscape composition and acoustic ecology
- Acousmatic music
- Sound diffusion theory
- Computer music programming
- Audio-visual installations
- Music theatre works

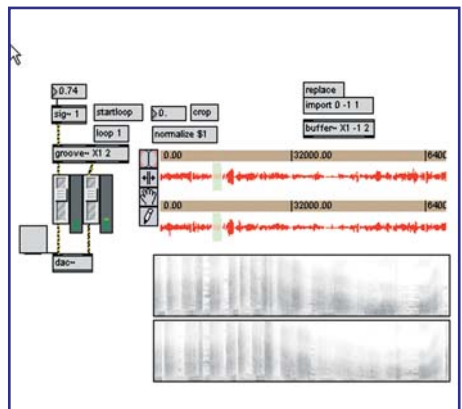
Deadlines for applications

We will consider applications for all courses throughout the year. Taught MA programmes (commencing in October) consider late applications throughout August.

University of Sheffield Sound Studios

(www.shef.ac.uk/usss)

USSS is the centre for a diverse range of activity, including various flavours of electroacoustic composition, software and hardware development, audio-visual art, interactive instrumental work, web design and CD/DVDA/DVDV and multimedia production. USSS is committed to the performance of new music and theoretical research into the aesthetics and analysis of electroacoustic music. USSS comprises two multi-user laboratory spaces and three state-of-the-art single-user composition spaces. Software includes products by cycling74, Adobe and Steinberg in addition to a range of specialist and proprietary tools.



Why Sheffield?

- One of Britain's foremost universities; in the safest and fourth-largest city in Britain.
- A lively city for music, with classical, traditional and popular musics all well represented including the newly established Ensemble 360.
- Governmental assessments cite the Department of Music as international quality (5) for research and excellent for teaching quality with state-of-the-art facilities (University of Sheffield Sound Studios, Reflex Lab virtual reality facility, Access Grid video conferencing node).
- The department boasts a thriving performance tradition in contemporary music, including the Sheffield University New Music Ensemble, Sound Junction, and close affiliation with Sonic Arts Network and the Society for the Promotion of New Music.
- A lively research environment, integrating composition with other specialisms in music, including popular music, music psychology, music education and performance studies. A growing portfolio of taught MAs including: Ethnomusicology, Music Performance, Music Theatre, Psychology of Music and Sonic Art.
- Excellent library holdings: books, scores, journals, CDs, electronic resources. Excellent support for Max/MSP/Jitter, Adobe, Steinberg software in the studios.

- High employment-rate of ex-students with many continuing through to PhD and academic posts.

Excellent technical and research team:

- George Nicholson (composer)
- Dorothy Ker (composer)
- Adrian Moore (composer)
- Dave Moore (software engineer)

For biographical details please see the Department of Music website.

- Bursaries, scholarships, conference grants and travel scholarships available. Postgraduate students may apply for a number of grants at national level (Art and Humanities Research Council) and locally (project grants, endowed awards and fee waivers). Students may also apply for Graduate Teaching Assistantships offered by the department.
- Excellent travel connections to National and International festivals (Huddersfield under one hour away, London 2.25 hours by train).
- First for student union facilities and support; superb cinema, sporting, leisure and entertainment provision.
- Affordable accommodation within walking distance.





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