

## BMUS(HONS)

Programme at a glance  
for incoming Undergraduate Exchange Students

Updated January 2021

Most undergraduate exchanges take place in the Autumn Term (September to December). This includes all Erasmus+ exchanges and most exchanges with our other international partner institutions. The information in this guide is for Autumn term exchanges.

Students from the RCM's partner institutions in the USA and Australia have the option to stay for a full academic year (September to July) in their third year of study. They complete the same third year BMus study modules as other RCM students and complete the same exams and assessment in the Spring and Summer terms. For information on credits and module choices for full year exchanges, please refer to the information for third year students in the main BMus At-a-glance guide. This can be found in the Course Outline section of <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/bmus/>.

### Course Content

Exchange students in the Autumn term follow the same pattern of study as other RCM students. Undergraduate students receive the following tuition during their stay:

- 10 hours of 1-to-1 Principal Study lessons
- A large programme of Faculty-based classes, workshops, activities, and performance opportunities
- Orchestra (subject to audition in September)
- Faculty supporting studies (depending on your instrument)
- Up to 3 optional modules (see list below), depending on availability

Students normally choose their options from the relevant year of the BMus (i.e. students in their third year of study at their home institution would choose options for year 3). However, we can be flexible for exchange students, so you are welcome to request options from other years to tailor your time at the RCM to your interests and requirements.

In this guide you can find information on how the BMus programme is structured and a list of modules. Module descriptions can be found at the back of this guide.

Please be aware that following the recommendations of a programme review in 2020, there may be some changes to the year 1 and 2 modules offered in 2021/22.

## Credit Framework

40 FHEQ credits/20 ECTS will be awarded for successful completion of the exchange period as a whole. This is equivalent to a single term (or trimester) of study. The UK-based FHEQ credit system converts easily into the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), with 2 RCM credits equalling 1 ECTS credit.

This number of ECTS is awarded because during an Autumn Term exchange, postgraduate exchange students cannot normally complete any formal assessment. RCM assessments normally take place during the Spring and Summer Terms. The structure of our courses is fully compliant with the Bologna Process. A standard full-time academic year is worth 120 FHEQ credits (60 ECTS).

At the end of the exchange period students are provided with a Certificate of Completion of Exchange and an Exchange Transcript by the RCM. This will be used by your home institution to recognise your period of study at the RCM and convert the credits you have gained to the system of credit used in your country.

Please note that the RCM does not use module codes.

## Faculty Activities

### Brass

As a brass student your weekly Faculty classes will include performance classes, ensemble classes and repertoire classes. In addition, there are instrument-specific masterclasses for trumpet, trombone, French horn and tuba, given by visiting artists and professors throughout each term. There are student-lead instrument clubs which are open to all to attend, as well as ensemble performance opportunities.

### Composition

As a composition student you have a weekly Faculty class. During this time there are talks from visiting composers exploring their works and on occasion they will look at student compositions. There are also visits from instrumentalists and groups explaining the multiple techniques which are possible on their instrument and offering advice on how to write for their instrument. At various points there will be opportunities for your works to be performed by a small group of instrumentalists and there are projects which you can apply to take part in.

### Historical Performance

As a historical performance student your weekly Faculty classes include performance classes, repertoire classes, critical listening and cadenzas. There are instrument-specific masterclasses for baroque strings, wind and keyboards over the course of the year given by visiting artists and professors, as well as collaborative masterclass opportunities with other faculties. There are coaching opportunities from visiting professors for solo and chamber groups and multiple performance opportunities such as baroque ensemble and performances in RCM baroque festivals.

### Keyboard

As a keyboard student you have a weekly performance class, which is led by an RCM keyboard professor. There are masterclasses for piano, collaborative piano and contemporary piano throughout the term given by visiting artists and professors. There are many performance opportunities, as well as the possibility to perform in the annual Keyboard Festival.

## Percussion

As a percussion student it is possible for you to participate in Faculty classes at various points throughout the term. There are masterclasses given by visiting artists and professors, with opportunities to have 1:1 lessons whilst they are with us.

## Strings

As a string student it is possible for you to attend instrument-specific performance classes at various points throughout the term. There are weekly Faculty classes for double bass, harp and guitar students. There are masterclasses for all instruments (violin, viola, cello, double bass, harp and guitar) given by visiting artists and professors, with opportunities to have 1:1 lessons with the visiting artists and professors whilst they are with us. In addition, there are orchestral audition classes and orchestral surgeries for students interested in orchestral performance.

## Voice

As a singer, your Faculty classes will include Italian, German and French classes, Song Classes (Italian, French, Lieder), Movement and Speech classes, and Acting and Stagecraft, which culminate in a set of Opera Scenes for students staying for the full academic year. In addition, there are weekly Faculty performance classes and Masterclasses with visiting distinguished artists. Vocal students take part in the RCM Chorus project and Chamber Choir and there are many other performance opportunities for which students can audition, such as the opera chorus, Historical Performance projects and Song Plus Concerts.

## Woodwind

As a woodwind student your weekly Faculty classes include performance classes, ensemble classes and repertoire classes. In addition, there are instrument-specific masterclasses for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and saxophone, given by visiting artists and professors at various points throughout the term. There are student-lead instrument clubs, which are open to all to attend and reed classes for oboe and bassoon students. There are many performance opportunities as well as internal concerts which you can sign up for.

# BMus Programme Structure

## Overview

### Years 1 and 2

- Performance in your Principal Study specialism, with regular Faculty-based workshops, activities, and opportunities for performance
- Training in music education
- Courses in music history and performance practice, practical musicianship/stylistic studies, aural awareness, study skills, Alexander Technique, and musicians' wellbeing
- Options in music history and stylistic studies topics in Year 2
- Opportunity to fast track to higher levels of study in aural awareness and practical musicianship Years 3 and 4
- Continuing work in performance studies
- Creation of a personalised programme of study from the following options

## Structure of the BMus course

### Year 1

Principal Study		
Historical Studies		Music in Our Time, taught in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly lectures</li> <li>• Weekly seminars</li> </ul>
Musicianship & Improvisation		Level taken is determined by the result you achieve in your start-of-year Placement Test.
Aural		Level taken is initially determined by the result you achieve in your start-of-year Placement Test, but during the course of the year you can opt to take whichever level you prefer, in consultation with your Aural professor.
Healthy Musician		including an Introduction to Healthy Practice and the Alexander Technique

### Year 2

Principal Study	Level 5	As for year 1.
Historical Studies	Level 5	Choice of courses available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the orchestra</li> <li>• public music</li> <li>• music for the theatre</li> <li>• musical genres</li> </ul>
Musicianship Workshops	Level 5 or 6	Choice of courses available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baroque Styles</li> <li>• Early Romantic Repertoire</li> <li>• 20<sup>th</sup>-century Styles</li> <li>• Introduction to Jazz Harmony</li> </ul>
Aural	Level 5 or 6	Level taken is initially determined by the result you achieve in your start-of-year Placement Test, but during the course of the year you can opt to take whichever level you prefer, in consultation with your Aural professor.
<b>OR</b>		
Aural in Professional Contexts	Level 6	You follow this course if you passed level 6 Aural in year 1. If you passed level 5 Aural in year 1 you can opt to take this course instead of level 6 aural.
Artist Development	Level 5	including Stagecraft & Communication, Digital Skills for Musicians and Career Management
Music Leadership: Learning and Participation	Level 5	

### Year 3

Principal Study	Level 6
Options	Levels 5 & 6

## Year 4

Principal Study                      Graduation Level                      As for Level 6 (year 3).

Options                                  Level 5 & 6                                  Choose from a range of level 5 and level 6 options.

## BMus Core Modules and Options

Please note that optional modules may be subject to change according to student numbers and availability of professors.

### Year 1 and 2 Modules

Level 4 & 5 Historical Studies

Level 4 Healthy Musician  
Level 5 Artist Development

Level 5 Music Leadership

Level 4, 5 & 6 Musicianship & Improvisation

Level 4, 5 & 6 Aural

### Year 3 and 4 Modules

#### Music in Context

Level 6 Advanced Stylistic Studies

Level 5 Historical Studies

Level 6 Historical Studies

#### Contemporary Cultures

Level 5 Writing About Music

Level 6 History in Practice

Level 5 Classical CD Production

Level 5 Composing with the Sequencer

Level 5 & 6 Composition

Level 6 Composition for Screen

Level 6 Electroacoustic Music

Level 5 Orchestration & Transcription

Level 6 Orchestration & Arrangement

Level 5 Jazz Harmony, Composition & Arranging

Level 6 Jazz Arranging & Composition

Level 5 & 6 Creative Enterprise

Level 5 Performance in the Digital Age

Level 5 Psychology of Performance I & II

Level 6 Instrumental/Vocal Teaching

Level 6 Aural

## Applied Skills

Level 6 Aural in Professional Contexts

---

Level 5 & 6 Piano Accompaniment

---

Level 5 & 6 Chamber Music (including Duo)

---

Level 5 & 6 Conducting

---

Level 5 Improvisation

---

Level 5 & 6 Interpretation of Song (singers only)

---

Level 6 Opera, Acting & Movement (singers only)

---

Level 6 Contemporary Music in Action

---

Level 6 Historical Performance

---

## Modules Available in Years 1 and 2

### Historical Studies

Level 4 and 5

At Level 4, this module is taught in four topic blocks, building on students' existing practical musical experiences. It teaches critical approaches to repertoire and to performance traditions. It also considers the role of the performer by investigating the historically founded social and cultural conditions under which our classical music industry operates. By studying select contemporary repertoire, students engage critically with boundaries around Western art music and concert culture.

At Level 5, there are several different strands available of which students choose one from either the orchestra, public music, music for the theatre or musical genres, and then one from chamber music, music and power, music and the language of emotions, opera and film, opera in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, opera in Vienna, the symphony in Britain, vocal chamber music, Western classical music and its others, and women in music. The strands enable you to extend your knowledge of music history and gain a broad and informed awareness of select composers, performers, genres and artistic ideas. A significant number of representative works in the field will be studied in context and in detail. You are encouraged to use both primary and secondary sources in order to gain an understanding of genres, repertoire, context and performance history.

### Healthy Musician

Level 4

At Level 4, this module provides knowledge and skills to help musicians develop healthy and sustainable careers. You will explore various resources available, with a focus on your health and wellbeing, covering the physicality and psychology of performing; protection of hearing; and physical fitness and nutrition for the musician. You will also receive introduction to Alexander Technique,

### Artist Development

Level 5

This module addresses three areas critical to the developing artist: stagecraft & communication; digital skills and career management.

### Musicianship & Improvisation

Levels 4, 5 and 6

Depending on the level you choose, these courses enable you to develop and further your understanding of musical materials (melody, harmony and form) through theory and practice. You will explore a range of tonal forms and harmonic techniques through stylistic composition, score analysis and improvisation on your principal study (or second study for

composers). By the end of the module you will have grown in your understanding of music theory with the confidence and skills to apply this in and through your principal study.

## **Musicianship Workshops**

Level 5 and 6

These modules explore various areas, including at Jazz Harmony at Level 5, and at Level 6, Baroque Counterpoint, Early Romantic Harmony or Twentieth Century Styles.

Through in-class analysis of set works you will develop an understanding of the language and techniques of these musical styles, with a view to creating your own compositions and arrangements.

## **Aural**

Level 4, 5, and 6

This module reviews and develops your aural perception. It will give you insights into why and how aural perception and analysis can assist in the understanding and interpretation of the instrumental or vocal music you are studying. At each level, you will be learning to recognise, and identify by ear, straightforward intervals, rhythms, motifs, textures and chord progressions in music from a range of styles; recognise, by ear, elements of musical organisation and style; read and perform short melodies and rhythms; and recognise how and why aural perception can assist in the understanding and interpretation of the instrumental or vocal music you are studying.

## **Modules Available in Years 3 and 4**

### **Advanced Stylistic Studies**

Level 6

In this module you will be analysing individual pieces of music, and recognising how styles and individual pieces function through the imitation of a selection of specific styles and forms. You will be constructing examples of larger forms through extending your contrapuntal and harmonic vocabulary, and manage an extended project, working to a given timescale.

### **Historical Studies**

Level 6

There are two taught courses within the Level 6 Historical Studies module (Aesthetics & Criticism and Music & Literature). These will develop your critical and analytical perceptions and resourcefulness through the study of repertoire and ideas; they will also locate informed musical discussion within a broader intellectual and interdisciplinary context. You will gain knowledge of a specially selected repertoire illustrative of a particular composer's creative processes or of a specific cultural milieu, prevailing aesthetic or range of intellectual concepts.

## **Writing about Music**

Level 5

This module will be team-taught through workshops. These practical sessions focus on the development of different styles of writing and voices; an array of strategies for communicative writing will be examined. These workshops also will explore various types of arts criticism and writing including descriptive (discussing the form of the work of art with attention given to understanding the work of art), interpretive (the writing reveals the content of the work of art), and evaluative (the writing judges or evaluates the artistic merits of the work or performance). There will also be opportunities for students to work with interdisciplinary materials if appropriate. This unit addresses a number of key questions about the practice of writing itself and also provides students with a supportive workshop environment within which to practice their craft.

## **Classical CD Production**

Level 5

In this module you will be learning the process of producing a professional standard classical CD, from the point of view of one of the roles (sound engineer, producer or editor). You will work as part of a team and apply project management, leadership, teamwork, negotiating and problem solving skills. You will learn, in practice, about the roles of engineers, producers, and editors, and will have opportunities to take part in and learn about all processes.

## **Composition with the Sequencer**

Level 5

In this module you will be creating music using the industry-standard Logic and Cubase sequencers with a wide range of digital sound samples. You will be developing awareness of music technology techniques to the processes of composition and applying organisational and project-management skills to the completion of three or four projects (7-10 mins total).

## **Composition**

Level 5 and 6

At Level 5, this module will enable you to write practically for instruments and for voices, and idiomatically for those with which you're most familiar. You will be working towards a coherent harmonic language and a critical attitude to rhythmic use, pacing a short composition effectively, and exploring and creating performance opportunities.

At Level 6, you will be writing fluently for at least one medium (possibly connected with your Principal Study) and confidently for other groups outside your own specialist area of performance. You will be expected to show evidence of creative invention and managing and evaluating projects with confidence and take initiatives with other performers.

## **Composition for Screen**

Level 6

Students will be developing skills in composing, arranging, orchestration and technology, as specifically applied to screen composition, and responding in a suitable and idiomatic manner on a music-dramatic level, with an understanding for common practice and stylistic trends. The content of supervisions is likely to cover film composition tutorials; basic sequencing, sampling; and hard-disk recording, timecode synchronisation, and mixing.



## **Electroacoustic Music**

Level 6

This module will introduce you to, and familiarise you with some advanced hardware and software tools and their use for the production of electroacoustic compositions. You will develop an appreciation of the broader technical and aesthetic issues relating to electroacoustic music.

## **Orchestration and Transcription**

Level 5

In this module, you will gain working and practical knowledge of the main orchestral instruments, their range, technical strengths and limitations, their individual and timbral qualities. You will be applying this knowledge in terms of how instruments can work in combination with others. You will be recognising the basic techniques of transcription that enable the effective and idiomatic transfer of musical material from one instrumental medium to another; identifying different methods of scoring and beginning to imitate period orchestral style; and demonstrating the use of correct notational techniques, musical grammar and terminology.

## **Orchestration and Arrangement**

Level 6

This module will concentrate on the orchestration of 20th and 21st century scores. Student will be able to demonstrate a sound working and practical knowledge of the main orchestral and other instruments, in terms of their ranges, technical strengths and limitations, and their individual qualities. Students will also be recognising, and applying, a fuller range of resources in terms of arranging and instrumental technique to enable the effective and idiomatic transfer of musical material between instrumental media; and imitating different instrumental and orchestral styles effectively.

## **Performance in the Digital Age**

Level 5

This course prepares performer for interacting with the digital world in its various manifestations. It will enable you to develop techniques for remote communication with performers, teachers and students, to learn how to set-up international remote sessions for performing, rehearsing, teaching and learning and to understand how musicians engage with new technology for teaching and performance enhancement.

## **Jazz Harmony, Composition and Arranging**

Level 5

In this module you will be developing the ability to use the harmonic and melodic vocabulary and procedures of jazz in compositions and arrangements. You will be expected to arrange tunes and write own composition(s) for small and medium-size bands, vocal ensemble and other common jazz ensembles in stylish and professional way. You will be able to recognise and use characteristic chords, sonorities, instrumental textures and forms of major jazz writers, including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Thad Jones, Gil Evans, and understand the musical and notational conventions of jazz performance and arrangement.

## **Jazz Arranging and Composition**

Level 6

This module will introduce you to effective and idiomatic writing for the jazz rhythm section and jazz wind instruments in compositions and arrangements, and enable you to develop understanding of harmonic and melodic shape in instrumental and vocal contexts. The content of supervisions is likely to cover analysis of harmony, arrangement and compositional techniques from c1930 to present day in the jazz style; pastiche exercises in a variety of styles; study of jazz composition and arrangement in a variety of ensemble sizes from small group to jazz orchestra; and lyric setting and the role of the voice in jazz.

## **Creative Enterprise**

Level 5 and 6

This module will be team-taught through lectures and workshops at Level 5. During the course of this module you will acquire entrepreneurial, business, and networking skills, gain basic understanding of marketing and market research, and learn team work in order to develop collaborative, communication, and interpersonal skills. You will also develop effective presentation skills and conduct individual skills audit in order to evaluate existing, and develop a strategy for acquiring new skills.

Level 6 module will enable you to acquire entrepreneurial, business, and networking skills, basic understanding of marketing and market research, as well as develop effective presentation skills, and learn team work in order to develop collaborative, communication, and interpersonal skills. In this module, you will develop a business idea with your group, and work on creating an effective marketing strategy, learn about business budgeting, and try out an elevator speech as a way to sell your business idea fast and with impact.

## **Alexander Technique**

Level 5 and 6

This module will give you understanding of the historical context of the Technique and FM Alexander's development of the 'Principles'. You will learn to recognise the personal habits that impede the coordination of your mind and body, and the means to work on these; and develop insights into how to apply Alexander Technique to personal practice and performance. (Subject to availability – these modules are often over-subscribed.)

## **Psychology of Performance I and II**

Level 5

This module is team-taught by staff within the Centre for Performance Science and comprises lectures, workshops, tutorials, and performances within the RCM's Performance Simulator. This module will introduce you to concepts and issues within performance psychology, as well as a range of related psychological concepts, and encourage you to relate them to your own music making. This module will also cover some of the psychological processes underlying the performance, perception, and composition of music.

## **Aural**

Level 6

This module reviews and develops your aural perception. It will give you insights into why and how aural perception and analysis can assist in the understanding and interpretation of the instrumental or vocal music you are studying. At each level, you will be learning to recognise, and identify by ear, straightforward intervals, rhythms, motifs, textures and chord progressions in music from a range of styles; recognise, by ear, elements of musical organisation and style; read and perform short melodies and rhythms; and recognise how and why aural perception can assist in the understanding and interpretation of the instrumental or vocal music you are studying.

## **Aural in Professional Contexts**

Level 6

Lectures in this module aim to stretch and challenge your aural skills through a wide range of activities that reflect the needs of the music profession, including transcription, transposition, complex rhythm reading, identifying performance errors, etc. In addition to Western classical music, you will listen to, analyse and transcribe pieces from a wide variety of oral musical traditions, including jazz, popular music, folk and world music. Classes will include written and practical activities; short written or practical exercises may be set each week.

## **Piano Accompaniment**

Level 5 and Level 6

At Level 5 this module will enable you to give an idiomatic performance with either a singer, instrumentalist or both. You will learn about the duo and song repertoire and have guidance on how to interpret the piano parts. You will gain an understanding of how to collaborate successfully with another instrumentalist or singer. Sight-reading will also play an important part in your development as an accompanist.

At Level 6 you will develop your sight-reading abilities so that you can incorporate the vocal line of a song into the piano part at sight. You will be expected to have a greater understanding of the poetry in songs and be confident in discussing it. You will increase your knowledge of the song and instrumental repertoire as well as develop your listening skills in order to collaborate on a higher level.

## **Chamber Music (including Duo)**

Level 5 and 6

This module offers student ensembles up to 12 hours of chamber music coaching per year. Your group will establish a regular pattern of coaching from the beginning of the academic year with one or more coaches chosen by you. Under the guidance of the coaching tutor you will select appropriate repertoire for detailed work at the relevant level in order to gain an awareness of the overall extent and character of this repertoire; develop self-motivation, discipline, good time management and the ability to function as a team member (while also taking leadership initiative where appropriate). Your coaching will focus on issues of chamber playing – balance, intonation, ensemble, interaction, and rehearsal protocols. You will prepare 50-60 minutes' music to concert standard.

Duo: You will be able to play a representative spread of repertoire for your chosen duo and gaining an awareness of the overall extent and character of this repertoire; achieve a balance, in your performing, between playing with personal conviction and accommodating the convictions of your duo partner; and perform with an understanding of the interchange of musical focus from one instrument to the other. You will be undertaking supervised preparation of 50-60 minutes' music to concert standard.

## **Conducting**

Level 5 and 6

At Level 5, you will be introduced to the art of conducting and provided with a basic technique and the ability to read and prepare scores from a conductor's viewpoint. The course begins contains a mixture of specific technique-based sessions and practical classes where you'll cover a range of repertoire, learning to adapt and extend your technical and intellectual facilities throughout. At Level 6, you will learn about the art of decision making as needed for conductors, specifically on how to take musical (ie interpretative) decisions and then put them into practice through rehearsal. (Subject to availability – please note that these modules are often over-subscribed.)

## **Improvisation**

Level 5

In this module you will learn to improvise in a range of harmonic and/or melodic styles, individually and as part of a group; develop self-confidence, creativity and the ability to coordinate and co-operate as part of a team; and demonstrate extended skills in listening and in musical and verbal communication.

## **Interpretation of Song (singers only)**

Level 5 and 6

You will perform a wide variety of core art song repertoire with confidence and assurance and demonstrate versatility and flexibility both in performance and in programme planning.

You will be able to consolidate performing skills as applied to art song and encourage the 'communicative impulse' to lie at the heart of all song class performance; demonstrate that at the heart of every performance is an appreciation of the interdependent roles of pianist and singer; and demonstrate an advanced facility in the correct pronunciation and communication of text.

## **Opera, Acting & Movement (singers only)**

Level 6

You will carry out the various stages of preparation required in order to perform part of a scene from an opera on stage in front of an audience.

## **Contemporary Music in Action**

Level 6

This module will enable you to learn how to achieve a high level of rapport with your composer-collaborator in the generation of a new piece of repertoire; gain a greater understanding of your Principal Study, and demonstrate through performance an extended range of possibilities in your instrumental/vocal technique. You will gain confidence and skill as a performer in the performance of contemporary repertoire; and acquire the necessary communication and organisational skills in a collaborative, musical work environment.

## **Historical Performance**

Level 6

Several projects run each Term, all delivered through a course of classes that culminate in an assessed performance. Projects usually culminate in a presentation class which is open to the public but not a formal concert, and have included: French early 18th century repertoire; Baroque dance; Ornamentation and Cadenza Classes; Medieval Music; and Lute song.