

Masters (MPerf, MComp, MMus)

Programme Outline (Course Catalogue)

Incoming Postgraduate Exchange Students

Updated November 2025

The information in this document is relevant to prospective exchange students on the RCM's programmes in Performance and Composition. Students will receive one-to-one advice from RCM academic staff to help them finalise their study programme at the start of their exchange.

Course Content

Postgraduate exchange students study at the RCM during the Autumn Term.

Exchange students follow the same pattern of study as RCM students. Students receive the following tuition during their stay:

- 13 hours of 1-to-1 Principal Study lessons
- Many faculty-based classes, workshops, activities, and performance opportunities
- Orchestra (subject to audition in September)
- Faculty Supporting Studies (depending on your instrument or specialism)
- Up to a maximum of three Elective modules (see list below), depending on availability

Credit Framework

40 FHEQ credits/20 ECTS will be awarded for successful completion of the exchange period. 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).

Please note that the RCM does not use module codes.

Faculty Activities

Voice

Your faculty classes will include Italian, German and French classes, Song Classes (Italian, French, Lieder), Acting and Stagecraft and Movement Classes. In addition, there is a weekly masterclass as well as performance classes and many other performance opportunities for which students can audition, such as the opera chorus, Historical Performance projects and Song Plus Concerts.

Brass

As a brass student your 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-led instrument clubs which are open to all, as well as ensemble performance opportunities.

Woodwind

As a woodwind student your faculty classes include weekly 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-led instrument clubs, which are open to all, and reed classes for oboe and bassoon students.

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.

Historical performance

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.

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.

Composition

As a composition student you have a weekly faculty class with talks from visiting composers exploring their works alongside student compositions. There are also visits from instrumentalists and groups explaining the multiple techniques for their instrument and instrumental combinations. There may be opportunities for your works to be performed by a small group of instrumentalists.

Keyboard

As a keyboard student you have a weekly performance class 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.

Elective modules

The availability of optional modules is subject to student numbers and professor availability.

Title	Description	Availability
Alexander Technique	You will explore the application of Alexander Technique to your practice, and processes of decision-making in performance. You will critically observe and analyse your own performance.	Not available to composers and screen composers. Tends to be oversubscribed.
Art of Piano Teaching	You will explore techniques for stylistically informed teaching of the core keyboard repertoire.	Keyboard players only
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.	Available to all faculties
Chamber Music / Chamber Project	You will form your own chamber group and receive regular, student-initiated coaching as well as performance opportunities where available.	Not available to composers, screen composers, conductors and singers
Collections in Practice	In this module you will explore artefacts in the RCM Museum, Library and Collections including autograph manuscripts, editions, and recordings.	Available to all faculties
Composition	You will 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.	Not available to composers. Prior experience required.
Composition for Screen	You will 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.	Not available to screen composers. Prior experience required.
Composition Supporting Studies	You will develop a sense of context and identity as an informed composer, increase your knowledge of contemporary compositional repertoire and analyse core texts including scholarly and professional literature.	Available only to composers
Concerto Performance	You will develop a mature interpretation of a substantial concerto in collaboration with a coach and perform a selection in a faculty concerto competition. ?	Not available to composers, screen composers, conductors or singers
Conducting	You will have practical classes on key works, including attention to directing ensemble, rehearsal techniques, comparative interpretations, and developing/communicating personal interpretations.	Not available to conductors and singers. Tends to be oversubscribed.
Contemporary Music in Action	You will explore the collaborative process of creating a new work between composer and performer and learn how to articulate in detail the process involved.	Not available to conductors. Majority of work takes place in the Spring Term.
Context, Material and Repertoire Portfolio	You will develop a sense of context and identity as an informed screen composer, increase your knowledge of contemporary compositional repertoire and analyse core texts including scholarly and professional literature, films and film scores.	Available only to composers/screen composers.
Continuo	You will 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).	Organ, cello, bass, bassoon, and HP-appropriate instruments only. Prior experience required.

Electronic Music	You will gain practical training in the use of advanced hardware and software tools in electronic and electroacoustic compositions.	Available only to composers/screen composers. Prior experience required.
Experimental Music	You will gain an introduction to experimental music including open scores, extended techniques and object-based music. You will develop a direct understanding of historical, practical, and aesthetic issues relating to experimental music performance practice.	Not available to conductors and singers
Historical Performance	You will explore a wide range of repertoire from 1600-1900 through projects organised by the Historical Performance department.	Not available to composers, screen composers, conductors and singers. Prior experience required.
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.	Available to all faculties.
Memorising Music	Learn the theory and practice of memorising music successfully.	Available to all faculties.
Musicianship & Improvisation	Explore musicianship and stylistic improvisation skills to an advanced level.	Available to all faculties.
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.	Strings, woodwind, brass and percussion only.
Orchestration Portfolio / Orchestration Project	You will explore how to write imaginatively and effectively for orchestra and other ensembles.	Not available to Historical Performance instruments and singers.
Orchestration for Screen	You will develop basic technical skills of effective orchestration for screen media by analysing existing models and considering the creative, aesthetic and practical issues of orchestration.	Screen composers only.
Performance Education	You will gain 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.	Available to all faculties.
Performance Psychology	You will be introduced 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.	Available to all faculties.
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.	Available to all faculties
Recording Experience	You will be introduced to the process of classical music recording. You will gain experience of the roles involved in producing a recording and learn how to prepare a score for editing.	Available to all faculties. Tends to be oversubscribed.

Repetiteur Skills	You will gain 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.	Keyboard only, except Collaborative Piano students. Prior experience required.
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.	Available to all faculties.
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.	Available to all faculties.
The Song Pianist	You will be introduced to the art-song repertoire, including how to accompany singers, approaches to the main sung languages and rehearsal technique.	Keyboard only.
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.	Available to all faculties.