Department of Music
"I never imagined myself composing when I first arrived, but here I am in the third year, having a composition played by Chimera, the Department’s modern music ensemble."

Naomi
3rd year
Studying music at York is an enriching and fulfilling experience.

Enter our Department and you can feel a buzz of creative energy from the 200 students and large staff of world-leading professional musicians engaged in studying, creating and performing music of all kinds.

Studying through performance and composition is central to our philosophy at York. We believe that it is crucial where possible to perform the music we study and create, and study the music we perform. This melding of rigorous academic work with performance is what makes our degree course at York so distinctive.

As an undergraduate you will study and perform a wide range of music, with modules ranging from Composition and Ensemble Singing, to Early Medieval Music and Gamelan. With our modular structure, you can tailor your degree to your own interests and passions. Our students go on to rewarding and diverse careers, from composition and performance to teaching, as well as further study.

A wealth of opportunity to engage in music will be opened up to you at York, such as performing in the many departmental ensembles, including the University Choir which regularly performs in York Minster, or community music projects.

Our students love studying here; this is borne out by the very high levels of student satisfaction in the latest National Student Survey. You can see what some of our students have to say about their experiences throughout this brochure.

We look forward to welcoming you to our lively, friendly and internationally respected Department.

Professor Jonathan Wainwright
Head of Department
Why study Music at York?

- Rigorous academic study is combined with numerous opportunities for performance
- First year undergraduates get involved in creating and performing from day one
- Choose from a wide range of modules to match your interests and ambitions
- We actively encourage students to run educational music workshops in the community
- The Department is home to a large number of ensembles that perform almost every kind of music
- You will be taught by professional musicians and composers who are world-leaders in their chosen field
- Our students go on to successful careers as performers, composers and teachers as well as entering areas such as law, finance and management
- Music is central to the cultural life of the city of York and students have many opportunities to engage in performance outside the University
- Our excellent facilities include two concert halls, extensive teaching rooms, studio facilities and practice rooms
- Our Department hosts a lively and varied concert programme throughout the year, with public performances on campus and across the city of York.
Having the freedom to follow my own interests is what makes studying Music at York so special.

Tom
1st year
A degree in Music will set you up for life in many different ways.

Many of our students choose to pursue a career in music as a performer, arranger or composer, as a writer or broadcaster, or as a teacher or project manager. Many students therefore undertake further study, often involving further performance courses, research degrees, teacher training or specialist courses in related fields.

Our many highly successful graduates include:

- Founder of the Early Opera Company, Christian Curnyn
- Film composer, Trevor Jones
- Cellist, Laura Moody
- Broadcaster and writer, Tom Service
- BBC Radio 3 presenter, Verity Sharp.

The transferable skills that you develop throughout your degree, such as presentation and leadership, can also be applied to a rich variety of careers in areas like law, finance and management.

Other opportunities to enrich your skills and employability include community outreach activity such as the student-run Music Education Group (MEG), which provides educational workshops to schools and the wider community.

The University’s Careers Service provides expert guidance and support on future careers and further study to our students while at York and beyond. We are committed to enhancing your employability during your time at York.

“"A Music degree offers an opportunity to develop a range of advanced skills – not only in the directly musical areas of performance, analysis and composition, but also more widely, in research, communication, teamwork, organisation and creativity. These transferable skills open up a broad range of employment opportunities, both in and outside the world of music.""

Kathryn
3rd year
What I love about studying at York is that you are able to focus in depth on the areas that interest you; the Music degree doesn’t attempt to cram the whole canon into three years.

Jessica
3rd year
Benjamin Till
Benjamin is a pioneer in the unusual field of the ‘through-composed Musical Documentary’, where contributors tell their stories through the medium of specially-written song.

I think what stands out about the Music degree course is that you can take what you want from it and there’s always scope for doing something a bit different, for breaking down boundaries, for finding your own direction. My whole career, which has combined music, documentary-making and drama, has been typified by working ‘outside the box’, an approach that was actively encouraged at York.

Many of my contemporaries are now successful musicians, playwrights, actors and screenwriters. They all share a strong belief that anything is possible creatively – a confidence, I believe, that, for me, came from studying Music at the University of York.

Helena Daffern
Helena took her BA, MA and PhD in Music at the University of York. She continues to work as a freelance classical singer for festival opera companies and in professional ensembles and as a soloist. She runs a voice consultancy partnership and teaches singing in the Department.

The main skill I took away from my undergraduate Music degree at York, in addition to building my ability as a musician and performer, was learning how to be an innovative thinker. I also had a lot of performing experience while at York so when I finished studying I was in good place to begin a career as a singer. If I had taken a Music degree anywhere else, I don’t think I would have had so much performance experience.

I would advise Music students currently studying at York to make the most of every opportunity the Department gives them. It certainly provides some amazing opportunities for performers and musicians and every student has the potential to leave York as a skilled and thoughtful musician.
Joe Walker

For 25 years, Joe Walker has edited some of the most prestigious and exciting projects in the feature film and TV industry, with credits including *Shame*, *Hunger*, and the documentary *Life in a Day*.

The Department offered a fascinating environment, with much cutting-edge music being performed and chewed over. I liked the way the course was marked by continual assessment – we had to immerse ourselves from the outset. There were no wilderness years followed by excruciating last-minute pressure, the experience for many of my university chums.

I was bowled over by the teaching staff who were all people with phenomenal levels of practical experience. There was the late Alan Hacker, my tutor, the foremost clarinettist of his generation who had worked closely with Harrison Birtwistle, and Neil Sorrell, who disappeared to Java in my first year and came back with a Gamelan (he is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department). I can’t think of a better place to sharpen your instincts about music. I wish I could do it all over again – perhaps this time I’d grab even more opportunities than I did.

Catherine Shackell

Catherine Shackell is a freelance musician specialising in community and education work. Her work includes an eclectic mixture of schools projects, lecturing and performing, as well as conducting and being administrator for the award-winning Cobweb Orchestra.

I chose to study Music at the University of York because it had such an exciting contemporary music scene with lots of performing opportunities.

The community music modules were particularly rewarding. I would advise any student to just go for it and make the most of all the opportunities that come their way.

The music skills I developed while at York have been invaluable in my career and have helped form the confidence I now have to be involved in many different aspects of music and other arts.
Throughout your three years at York, the Music degree programme is taught through a series of modules known as ‘projects’. Each term you select from a wide range of choices the area you wish to study in depth. Projects vary each year so please refer to our website: www.york.ac.uk/music.

Projects in 2011/12 included:

- Musical Analysis
- Staging Opera
- Textures and Counterpoint
- The Jazz Diaspora
- Composition
- 17th and 18th-Century Vocal Music
- Music Therapy
- Debussy
- Future Lab (digital music production)
- Conducting
- Music in the Community
- Gamelan
- The String Quartet
- Early Medieval Music.

The unique projects system at York allows you to tailor your degree by choosing areas of study that suit your individual interests. All students will undertake a mixture of musicology and analysis, composition and performance, with the opportunity to specialise. For example, singers can experience projects with the internationally renowned vocal director, Robert Hollingworth, and composers can choose to work with a range of professional composers who cover different genres and styles.

Each project is taught over the course of a whole term. In the first half you’ll have intensive taught sessions under the guidance of our course tutors, who are all active researchers in their specialist fields. These sessions usually include a variety of lectures, seminars, performances, workshops, classes, discussions and group study.

During the second half of the term you’ll work with tutorial help to produce a portfolio of work. The nature of the submission is flexible; it may contain an essay, compositions or technical exercises, a performance, an edition, or a recording.

Most projects are assessed by a submission at the end of the module. There are no formal written examination papers. In addition, final year students may offer a Recital or an Independent Composition Folio. All final year students also submit their Solo Project (see opposite), on a subject of their own choice.

“Music is a creative, communicative activity. What better way of learning about it than directly experiencing it? Lectures are an important component of any project, of course, but so are practical sessions, exploring the music from the inside by performing or composing. York’s system of intensive project teaching enables us to mix these with discussions, presentations from guest speakers, and one-to-one tutorials, meaning staff and students alike are really immersed in the topic. It’s exhilarating!”

Dr Martin Suckling
Lecturer
The Practical Project

As well as the projects that you take throughout your three years, the annual Practical Project is run at the beginning of each academic year and involves all first-year students, along with other undergraduates and visiting students. The production involves an intensive five-week rehearsal period, culminating in several public performances in the University’s Concert Series. The Practical Project is led by a different member of staff each year and often reflects a particular research interest: over recent years it has varied from a traditionally-staged baroque opera to a newly-devised music theatre piece.

The Solo Project

The Solo Project is an independent study module which gives you the opportunity to explore in depth an area of music that particularly interests or excites you. You will experience research-planning, by establishing a scholarly or creative project and seeing it through to a finished piece of work which should be impeccably presented. The Solo Project encourages independent thinking and learning, so skills that you develop are invaluable to whatever future career you decide to pursue. Many students use it as a springboard into the field they enter after their degree.

The Solo Project can take the form of an extended written essay on an original topic, but there are other creative possibilities. In recent years these have included:

- A music theatre production
- A technical production of an original album of performance art
- Classroom and community-based projects
- Transcription and editing
- Ethnomusicological fieldwork
- Electroacoustic installation.

Instrumental/vocal tuition

Students are encouraged to link project choices with instrumental/vocal tuition. Our Department offers a wide range of high profile instrumental and vocal tutors, all of whom are active performers in their field.

Watch a video showing highlights from the 2011 Practical Project Goodnight Gertrude at: www.york.ac.uk/music/undergraduate/practical-project
As an undergraduate you will benefit hugely from being taught by academic staff at the forefront of their particular fields. Many undergraduates get involved in helping shape the research itself or use the findings to develop their own projects. The Department supports a wide range of study in the areas of composition, musicology and analysis, performance, music technology, jazz and improvised music, and ethnomusicology.

Here are just a couple of examples of recent research carried out within the Department:

**The Jazz Diaspora**
Composer, saxophonist and lecturer Dr Jonathan Eato is undertaking in-depth research into the connections between UK and South African jazz practice in collaboration with the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch. This research is being developed with the musicians who make the music, both in the UK and in South Africa, and is heavily informed by their musical thinking. Many of the UK musicians are actively involved in research and teaching at the University.

Dr Jonathan Eato says, “The beauty of York’s project system is that I can immediately explore the most current materials and approaches with York undergraduates. So one day I’ll find myself editing Chris McGregor’s *Brotherhood of Breath* manuscripts and creating performance materials with a group of students and the next day we’re performing the music with former members of the Brotherhood. In this way seminar discussions have a very real effect on how the music is heard, and they also help shape the published form.”

**Making Being Dufay**
Being Dufay is a new musical work by British composer Dr Ambrose Field, Reader in the Department of Music. The piece places Guillaume Dufay’s music in the present tense by creating a new musical landscape around six tiny original fragments dating from 1425 to 1450. Live electronics and tenor voice are combined to create a lush, contemporary sound world. Being Dufay premiered at the Vienna Konzerthaus, Austria in 2009 and has since toured internationally.

Using this research, Dr Field devised an undergraduate project. “Making Being Dufay uncovered new ways of using Early Music in creative performance,” says Dr Field. “I wanted to give students an equally exciting challenge together with the opportunity to engage with what I’d learned from delivering *Being Dufay* professionally. To this end, I created a project module in conjunction with the National Centre for Early Music (NCEM). The students’ task was to devise new musical realisations of York’s historic Mystery Plays. All music was composed and performed by the undergraduates, and presented at sell-out concerts at the NCEM.”
The Department of Music provides an exceptional setting for teaching and learning, composition and performance, with excellent facilities and performance spaces.

The Department is housed in an attractive modern building which radiates out from the Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall. There are dozens of practice rooms and teaching rooms which are also suitable for ensemble rehearsals. The recently built Music Research Centre has up-to-date recording and digital music composition studios.

**Performance facilities**

The Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall and the Arthur Sykes Rymer Auditorium are part of the Department of Music. For very large scale performance we also use the University's Central Hall on campus and York Minster in the city centre.

**Teaching facilities**

There are ten large teaching spaces, all equipped with projectors, sound equipment and pianos. Because most of our teaching is done in groups of less than 25, we rarely need a large lecture theatre and, when we do, the Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall and the Arthur Sykes Rymer Auditorium are fully equipped with projection and sound facilities.

**Studio facilities**

Digital music features strongly in our research and teaching, and we have three studios and a dedicated music technology teaching room.

**Practice facilities**

We have an excellent range of practice facilities including large rehearsal spaces and practice rooms of various sizes, which you can book through the Department.

**Instruments, scores and books**

We provide a wide range of high quality keyboard, orchestral and non-western instruments, along with high quality studio equipment. The University Library houses an extensive collection of scores and books related to music as well as sound resources (CDs and DVDs) and electronic resources. The York Minster Library, based in the centre of York, is open to all University of York students and contains an impressive collection of music manuscripts and early printed sources.

"The Music Department at York is unparalleled in the variety of modules it offers; one term I was writing a score for the prog rock band and Jazz Orchestra, and the next performing a Bach recital. I feel a lot more rounded as a musician, having taken in a broad spread of modules in my time here."

David
3rd year
As soon as you become a Music undergraduate at the University of York you become part of a vibrant and exciting musical community, both within the Department itself and across the wider campus. This vast range of musical opportunities includes involvement in ensembles or membership of musical groups run by the Students’ Union.

The ensembles
Almost every kind of music is performed by the Department’s many ensembles, and all Music students are required to join one of these.

Choral ensembles include the University Choir, the Chamber Choir, the Gospel Choir Zamar, and The 24 – a progressive vocal group which has toured internationally and specialises in new and unusual music across all genres and periods. Our many and varied instrumental ensembles include the University Symphony Orchestra and the University Chamber Orchestra which perform primarily Western art music and new compositions, while the Baroque Ensemble, University Jazz Orchestra and Gamelan Sekar Petak excel in their specific types of performance.

We also host a number of guest ensembles each year, which provide great opportunities for collaboration between professional musicians, staff and students.

During the University term there are several concerts each week, most of them in our concert hall and most of them free to students.

Wider musical opportunities
There is a wealth of music societies for students to join at the University. These range from the Opera Society, the Concert Band, the Gilbert and Sullivan Society and the York Big Band, to the Concert Orchestra, the University Brass Band and the Revelation Rock Gospel Choir.

The Music Society encourages and facilitates music-making on campus, providing professional performance opportunities for students in the free lunchtime concert series on Tuesdays and Fridays during term time.

An entirely York student-run organisation, the Music Education Group (MEG), works in schools, with elderly and disabled people and in other community environments, providing educational music workshops throughout the year. Many of our students get involved with MEG, which can be an enormously fulfilling experience and add valuable skills to their CV.

“Taking part in the Music Education Group has really inspired me to help people through the power of music and has helped me choose my next step: a postgraduate course in Community Music.”

Thomas
3rd year
The undergraduate course was exactly what I was looking for in a music degree: the ability to combine academic study with performance. There are so many opportunities – if you have a specific interest it is a simple matter of speaking to someone and you can get involved.

Tom
MA Performance
The city of York is the perfect place in which to study and perform music.

As well as the large number of opportunities to engage in music in the Department of Music and across the campus, the city is host to a diverse range of orchestras, choirs, jazz bands and other musical groups, as well as an eclectic range of performance venues.

**National Centre for Early Music**

Based in a medieval church in York, the National Centre for Early Music (NCEM) is home to the internationally acclaimed York Early Music Festival and promotes a year-round series of jazz, world, folk and early music concerts as well as a thriving education programme. Many students in the Department of Music get the chance to collaborate and perform at the NCEM.

**York Minster**

Performing in the unique atmosphere of York Minster is something that many students say makes their experience of studying in York so special. The Minster is host to a year-round programme of concerts, including performances by the University Choir and other ensembles.

Other musical groups in York range from the York Musical Society, which regularly performs in the Minster, to the York Symphony Orchestra and the York City Gospel Choir.

“I’m a big fan of early music performance and York is the ideal place to satisfy this love – the Early Music Festival, many lecturers specialising in Renaissance and Baroque music and lots of ensembles geared towards historically-informed performance.”

**Richard**

1st year
Global connections

Widening your horizons

Music undergraduates have an opportunity to study abroad for one or two terms as part of the ERASMUS Scheme.

Current institutions partnering the Department of Music are: the Sibelius Akatemia (Sibelius Academy), Helsinki, Finland; Turun Yliopisto – University of Turku, Finland; Université François Rabelais, Tours, France; Ruprecht Karls Universität, Heidelberg, Germany and the Ionian University, Corfu, Greece.

The University also offers exchange schemes with international institutions in North America, Asia and Australia. To find out more go to www.york.ac.uk/study/study-abroad.

We also offer free language tuition to all first year students.

Welcoming international students

The University warmly welcomes applicants from around the world. Our International Recruitment team is there to help international students with the application process.

The University also has an International Student Support team of advisers who assist overseas students with all aspects of life in York. Our popular International Students’ Association organises events throughout the year.

If English is not your first language you will be asked to provide evidence of your English language ability. The University offers further support with free, specialised English language tuition in your first year.

Visit our website for full details at www.york.ac.uk/study/international.
The Department of Music welcomes all enquiries from potential undergraduates and we are committed to offering places to students from a diverse range of educational and vocational backgrounds. We hope you will become part of our lively and dynamic community.

**Entry requirements**

For full details of our entry requirements and how to apply please visit www.york.ac.uk/music/undergraduate/howtoapply.

**Student financial support**

We encourage everyone with potential to study here. Information about fees and financial support is available on our website at www.york.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding.

**Bursaries and scholarships**

The University of York has a range of general scholarships and bursaries available for home and overseas students.

For full details please visit www.york.ac.uk/students/housing-and-money/financial-support/bursaries.

Choral scholarships are offered each year by the Dean and Chapter of York Minster. Choral scholars are members of the Minster Choir and receive a scholarship of £5,000 per annum.

For more information see www.york.ac.uk/music/undergraduate/funding.

**Mature students**

Every year we welcome a number of mature students. We can offer you the necessary support and guidance to successfully complete your degree course and develop the skills to help you obtain a rewarding career.

For further information visit www.york.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying/mature.

**Open Days**

We’d love you to visit the Department of Music on one of our Open Days, where you can come and see the University and meet the admissions tutor. For forthcoming dates visit www.york.ac.uk/openday.
One of the best things for me when I started here as a Music student was that I was given music ‘parents’; these were 2nd and 3rd year students who showed me everything I needed to know on the campus and in the city. It immediately made me feel welcome and settled.

Lucy
3rd year
For full details about our BA degree course and for more information about the Department, visit our website at [www.york.ac.uk/music](http://www.york.ac.uk/music).

You can download the University’s Undergraduate Prospectus at [www.york.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/prospectus](http://www.york.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/prospectus).

For undergraduate admissions enquiries please contact our team:

Tel: +44 (0)1904 322446
Email: music@york.ac.uk

“I am a great believer in having that ‘gut feeling’ telling you that ‘this is the place for me!’ I got that as soon as I arrived in the Department. The staff really care about me as an individual, on both a personal and musical level. It is such a friendly and fantastic place.”

Tom
3rd year