The flexible nature of the undergraduate degree at York allowed me to develop my core skills as well as pursue in-depth research into my specific areas of interest; it was this aspect of the Department, along with the incredibly lively atmosphere, that made me choose to stay here for an MA.

Sarah
MA student
Welcome to the Department of Music

The Department of Music at the University of York is an acknowledged world-leader in creative, practical and scholarly approaches to music.

Our alumni occupy positions of significance nationally within the music industry and associated professions. Throughout your course you will be taught by eminent scholars, performers, composers, teachers and researchers, and our modules are informed directly by recent research. Our flexible course structure promotes academic excellence through practical music experience.

Ranging from symphony orchestras to Zamar Gospel Choir, with specialist jazz, early music, chamber, Baroque, new music, gamelan, vocal and experimental ensembles, York offers an extensive range of performance groups within the Department.

There are also many opportunities for composers to develop their own music in conjunction with our student and professional ensembles, and for students to work with technology in our purpose-built studios.

At York you will be able to develop your own distinctive approach to music. This is a department where there is a strong and friendly student and staff community, who are committed to working together to achieve high quality results.

York offers you considerable choice in what you do: it is possible to select a route through our degree programme which both stretches you academically, and maximises your own strengths. We value personal interaction and teach in small groups, through a combination of lectures, workshops and seminars. Whilst within the Department performance and creativity are deeply embedded within our daily activities, our students are also regularly involved in international tours, BBC broadcasts, local community and education groups, and national festival performances. We look forward to welcoming you to our vibrant and internationally respected department.

Professor Ambrose Field
Head of Department
Why study Music at York?

- Students go on to successful careers in music, as well as in fields such as law, finance and management
- Staff include internationally-renowned scholars, composers and performers
- Excellent facilities including two concert halls and three studios
- Home to many ensembles and the region’s most exciting professional concert series
- Scholarly enquiry pursued through performance, musicology and composition: a wide range of modules to match your interests and ambitions
- A diverse collection of instruments for student use, including a complete Javanese gamelan, early keyboard instruments, viols and organs
- 96% of research activity rated ‘internationally recognised’ (REF 2014 assessment)

(below) The Department is home to a diverse range of ensembles, all directed by practising professionals.
What I loved about 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
Recent graduate
BA (Hons) in Music

The York Music graduate is a creative, critical, independent thinker.

Our degree programme develops these qualities through our modular teaching system, where scholarly enquiry is pursued through the combination of performance, musicology and composition. Both flexible and challenging, we deliver a balanced musical education and develop key skills, whilst providing you with opportunities to specialise and pursue your own choices of study under expert guidance.

Course structure

Each term you select the area you wish to study in depth from a wide range of choices. You will 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.

Alongside this, you will work with tutorial help to produce a portfolio of work. The nature of the submission is flexible, tailored to the area of study and your own interests; it may contain an essay, compositions or technical exercises, a performance, an edition, or a recording. You will develop your research techniques, skills in writing about music, and your analytical, critical and creative thinking.

All students will undertake a mixture of musicology, analysis, composition and performance, with the opportunity to specialise. For example, singers can experience modules 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.

Music is a creative, communicative activity. What better way of learning about it than directly experiencing it? Lectures are an important component of any module, of course, but so are practical sessions, exploring the music from the inside by performing or composing.

Dr Martin Suckling
Lecturer
York appealed to me because of the fantastic atmosphere and the excellent course. Our lecturers are down to earth, extremely interesting, and passionate teachers, as well as producing some top current research. For students this translates into a stimulating academic environment, offering in-depth insight into a wide variety of topics.

Anna
3rd year undergraduate

Assessment

The York Music degree is unique in its approach to assessment.

We want to discover what you can create in response to our teaching; closed written exams are not necessarily the best way to achieve this. Instead, the majority of your assessment will be through portfolios, which might consist of one or more essays, compositions, performances or other options. This approach challenges you to take what you have been taught and extend it into new, exciting areas.

Find a full list of recent modules at:
www.york.ac.uk/music/undergraduate/modules

Recent modules

- Musical Analysis
- Staging Opera
- Textures and Counterpoint
- The Jazz Diaspora
- Composition
- Performance Practice
- Debussy
- Stravinsky
- Conducting
- Chamber Music
- Instrumentation
- Music in the Community
- Gamelan
- The String Quartet
- Early Medieval Music
- The Body in Musical Performance
- The Piano Today
- Music Theatre
- Critical Musicology
- Introduction to the Psychology of Music
- Music Production
Practical Project

Practical Project is an opportunity to get to know other students in the Department quickly, through working together making a professional production for a paying audience.

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 production involves an intensive five-week rehearsal period, culminating in several public performances in the University’s Concert Series.

Whatever the musical focus, Practical Project will introduce you to the close-knit relationship between creative and academic work that is a distinctive feature of the York Music degree.

Core skills

In your first year you also take lectures and classes that develop historical awareness alongside the practical and intellectual skills you need to be a successful musician. These include: Aural Skills; Writing about Music; Harmony and Counterpoint; and ‘Listen to This!’, an exploration of key musical works from the past 1000 years.

Instrumental/vocal tuition

The Department provides a generous bursary for all undergraduates which supports your instrumental and vocal lessons. We offer a wide range of high profile, professional teachers, all of whom are active performers in their field.
Case study: Nimishi Ilango’s Solo Project

Following a performance of Beethoven’s ‘Kreutzer’ Sonata for violin and piano in his home in Moscow, Tolstoy was inspired to write his dark and intense novella, ‘The Kreutzer Sonata’. My solo project explored this poetic reading of Beethoven’s work, examining whether Tolstoy heard in the music his feelings about his family life and philosophies coming to fruition, or if he heard his pessimism exhibited without satisfactory closure.

My most exciting moment (though there were a few!) was when I had completed my research into Tolstoy’s beliefs, not just what his incredibly pessimistic views were but why he felt that way. I then listened to the ‘Kreutzer’ Sonata again, as if with completely fresh ears, and it really touched me! Moreover, it helped hugely in knowing how to analyse the music. This is a method I had never encountered or tried before, but hope to be able to use again.

Reflection or Resolution?
Tolstoy’s gendered response to Beethoven’s ‘Kreutzer Sonata’

Nimishi Ilango
Our Music and Sound Recording course offers students a bespoke training in music production methods. It is aimed at students who seek employment in media-related industries, small businesses, or as independent artists.

The course covers a range of production situations aligned to music from classical, non-western and popular music genres. You will encounter production strategies from a wide variety of perspectives.

The more overtly interventionist techniques that typify pop, rock and electronic music production are explored in detail covering: signal processing techniques and technologies that underlie them; their practical application in your own productions; and their changing use as expressive tools and signifiers of style in the productions of others. Alongside this, you are introduced to software systems for computer-based performance and manipulation of sound before learning how to integrate bespoke hardware interfaces into large-scale audio and music technology systems that you design. Your work is supported through a blend of lectures, workshops and one-to-one tutorials.

The Department staff possess a wide range of specialist knowledge. As the course progresses, you can focus increasingly on a specific area of production, or blend freely approaches from today’s popular, commercial music with contemporary art-making practice.

The University is home to one of the UK’s premier listening environments for recorded music. The Rymer Auditorium is a 150-seat venue offering high-resolution audio playback (certified to pmc-15 industrial standards), equipped with a large-capacity Genelec surround audio system, and offering an impressive floor-to-ceiling video projection system.

Relevant aspects of acoustics, psychoacoustics and electroacoustics, combined with practical experience of microphone techniques and editing methods for classical recording, introduce you to the behaviour of sound, our perception of it and the aesthetic and technical issues that must be addressed to capture it successfully and meaningfully.

As a BA (Hons) Music and Sound Recording student, you can choose additional modules from the BA in Music (Hons) programme.

See pages 6-9 for details or visit www.york.ac.uk/music/undergraduate

(facing) Students have the opportunity to develop their production skills in a wide range of musical environments.

(below) An electroacoustic concert in the Rymer Auditorium – one of the UK’s premier listening environments for recorded music.
A vibrant musical community

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.

The Department boasts a wide range of ensembles covering all musical styles, with departmental ensembles primarily organised and directed by staff members. The vast range of musical opportunities within the Department is augmented by student-run ensembles and musical groups run by the Students’ Union.

Department ensembles

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

Choral ensembles include the University Choir, the Chamber Choir, Vox, the Zamar Gospel Choir, 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 and Chamber Orchestras, and University Sinfonietta, which perform primarily western art music. Specialist ensembles, such as the University Baroque Ensemble, University Jazz Orchestra, the Chimera Ensemble new music group, the Assembled improvisation group, 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 halls and free to students. For full details on the current YorkConcerts series, visit www.yorkconcerts.co.uk

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.

The Music Education Group (MEG) – an entirely student-run organisation – 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 is not only an enormously fulfilling experience but also enhances their employability by adding valuable skills to their CVs.

(facing page, from top left)
A selection of the vast range of events put on in the Department every term: the Chimera Ensemble new music group; University Orchestra performing Messiaen’s Turangalîla-Symphonie with Joseph Houston and Cynthia Millar; Victoria Bernath and Mark Hutchinson rehearsing for a recital; Dan Hodd and Merit Stephanos in a newly-devised music theatre performance; University Choir and Orchestra performing in Central Hall; an orchestra rehearsal; Jazz Orchestra concert; and a semi-staged production of Britten’s Albert Herring.
The Department provides an exceptional setting for teaching and learning, composition and performance, with excellent facilities and performance spaces.

The Department of Music houses two concert halls on site. The Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall is equipped with two Steinway grand pianos, a neo-Baroque concert organ, and a beautiful acoustic appropriate for instrumental and vocal music. Meanwhile, the Rymer Auditorium has an acoustic designed by Arup Associates to provide an incredibly detailed listening experience and high specification surround-sound audio facilities.

**Instruments, scores and books**

The John Paynter Music Library is an elegant facility, located within the University Library, and is home to the main music collections. It is also equipped with digital pianos, and media replay equipment.

The York Minster Library, based in the centre of York, is open to all university students and contains an impressive collection of music manuscripts and early printed sources.

A large of collection of instruments and scores are available for students to borrow, from both Western and non-Western traditions.

**Practice rooms**

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.

**Studios**

Digital music features strongly in our research and teaching, and we have three studios and a dedicated music technology teaching room.
As an undergraduate you will benefit hugely from being taught by academic staff at the forefront of their particular fields.

Staff pursue their research hand-in-hand with their teaching, with many undergraduates getting involved in helping shape the research itself or using it as a starting point to develop their own ideas.

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.

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 modular 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.”

**Being Dufay**

*Being Dufay* is a new musical work by British composer Professor Ambrose Field. 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* premièred at the Vienna Konzerthaus, Austria in 2009 and has since toured internationally.

Using this research, Professor Field devised an undergraduate module.

“Making *Being Dufay* uncovered new ways of using Early Music in creative performance,” says Professor 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 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.”
York – a city of music

With its vibrant cultural life and excellent transport links to cities across the country, 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.

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.

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.

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 undergraduate
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 include:

- Sibelius Akatemia (Sibelius Academy), Helsinki, Finland
- Turun Yliopisto – University of Turku, Finland
- Université François Rabelais, Tours, France
- Ruprecht Karls Universität, Heidelberg, Germany
- Ionian University, Corfu, Greece

The Department also has an agreement with Tianjin Conservatory of Music, China, enabling academic and research exchange.

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

All undergraduates are entitled to a free 19-week language course at the University’s Languages for All centre.

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.

In addition to support from within the Department, 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.

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 creativity, professionalism, and critical thinking that you develop in our Music degree sets you up for a wide variety of careers, both within the field and beyond. There is something in the discipline of Music that equips our students to go far and wide.

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. Others undertake further study, often involving further performance courses, research degrees, teacher training or specialist courses in related fields.

The transferable skills that you develop throughout your degree, such as leadership and presentation, 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.

Our many highly successful graduates include:

- Founder of the Early Opera Company, Christian Curnyn
- Film composer, Trevor Jones
- Cellist, Laura Moody
- Composer, Christian Mason
- Broadcaster and writer, Tom Service
- BBC Radio 3 presenter, Verity Sharp
- Gillian Moore, Head of Music at the Southbank Centre
- juice vocal ensemble, formed at York.

What York does extremely well is offer the resources, teaching and time for students to experiment, discover their voice, and find a niche: something rather important in a climate where just being an excellent violinist/pianist/soprano won’t cut it.

Kerry Andrew
Award-winning composer and founder member of juice vocal ensemble
Improvising drummer and composer Simon Roth has pursued a diverse career in composition, performance, and as founder of innovative contemporary arts group, Pop-Up Circus.

Studying at York is very much a microcosm of real life. There are many choices and directions that you can go in, and even if you want to take all of them, you can only choose one at a time.

York graduate Anna Meredith is at the forefront of the current generation of young British composers.

I loved doing my degree at York. This was the perfect course for me as it gave me the opportunity to really stretch myself in areas I was already excited about - like composing and running the new music group, playing loads in all the ensembles and orchestras and looking at aspects of musicology - but it also gave me a chance to explore aspects of music that I wasn’t expecting and loved, such as gamelan, electro-acoustic music or being involved with the practical project.

The course really challenged me and changed the way I’ve thought about composing and music making since then and I really valued the chance to be so hands-on with so many of the department’s opportunities.

I’m always amazed at the number of York music graduates I meet through the various projects and commissions I do and the variety of careers and interests we’ve all gone on to, but what seems common is how positively everyone remembers their time there.

The modular system there means that you can construct your own educational path, and this undoubtedly shaped who I am as a musician, thinker and educator. I underwent an enriching process to translate this information into what is, in essence, a personal musical language that I am still building today.
York is the place to study music in the UK, and I can honestly say that I spent the best three years of my life there. I genuinely believe that York music graduates are one step ahead of the rest when it comes to finding jobs. There’s a huge amount of respect for both the course and the University. I always feel very proud to have studied at York.

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 ‘out of the box’ – an approach that was actively encouraged at York.

The music degree is academically challenging but with strong vocational and performance-focused elements. I chose a range of modules, including courses in improvisation, contemporary musical theatre and composition. I even got to direct a Britten operetta as part of the course!

I also got very involved in wider activities across the campus, in particular the drama society which helped shape my hybrid approach to music and film-making.

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.

Entrepreneur Ben Hines founded Moving Performance in 2009, an organisation that inspires and engages leaders at all levels through music.

York taught me that everyone can participate in musical performance – and I have taken those concepts and ideas into the business world, and now use music to help people learn about themselves and their role in their business, organisation, and team in a completely new way.
The Department of Music welcomes all enquiries 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

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

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 help you develop the skills to obtain a rewarding career.

Bursaries and scholarships

Information about fees and financial support is available on our website at www.york.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding

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, and by St Wilfrid's and St Helen's Churches.

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

Contact us

We are very happy to talk to prospective applicants personally. Feel free to contact us to discuss your application.

- music@york.ac.uk
- +44 (0)1904 322446
- Follow us on Twitter: @Music_at_York
- Like us on Facebook: /MusicAtYork
For full details about our BA degree courses and for more information about the Department, visit our website at www.york.ac.uk/music.

You can download the University’s Undergraduate Prospectus at 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

Photography by BBC, Sarah Goulding, John Houlihan, Christopher Leedham, Gabrielle Motola, National Centre for Early Music, Dannie Price, Owen Richards, Jürgen Schadeberg, Martin Scheuregger, Michael Xuereb and Olesya Zdorovetska.