

Postgraduate  
MMus [full-time and part-time]

# Bath Spa University Songwriting





This is the world's first and only Master's Degree in Songwriting. Offered in both attendance-based and distance learning formats, it is aimed at unpublished songwriters wishing to develop their craft to a professional level, or published songwriters wishing to achieve academic accreditation and continue to improve creatively. The course, which is based at Corsham Court will help you to develop a range of critical, practical, communicative, industrial and research-based skills. During the programme you will learn to:

- Comment critically upon your own and others' material
- Examine the musicological roots of your craft
- Consider the commercial value of your songs in the marketplace
- Rewrite and collaborate
- Conduct academic research
- Develop technical skills
- Create a professional-standard portfolio of your work

# Snapshot



## Awards

- Master of Music (MMus) Songwriting.

## Course length

- MMus full-time: three trimesters (one calendar year).
- MMus part-time: six trimesters (two calendar years).
- also available as a distance learning route.

## Course location

Corsham Court Campus.

## Key features

- taught by published songwriters.
- Bath Spa University has pioneered the teaching of songwriting.
- as the only course of its type in the world, the MMus Songwriting offers a unique programme of study.
- strong links with music industry bodies and publishers.

## Applications

Application forms are available on the website and for any admissions enquiries please contact:

T: +44 (0)1225 875609

E: [admissions@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bathspa.ac.uk)

[www.bathspampa.com](http://www.bathspampa.com)

## Enquiries

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# The Course

## Course structure and content

The course is available on either a full-time (typically one year); part-time (typically two year); or distance learning basis. The academic year is 12 months long and comprises three semesters: October-January; February-June; and June-October. Taught sessions are held during the daytime. Professional songwriters, music publishers and others involved in the songwriting industry visit regularly to teach, host Q and A sessions and give masterclasses.

## Distance learning

We offer a low-residency 'distance learning' version of MMus Songwriting that is also open to both UK and overseas applicants. Initially, students spend an induction week at our Corsham Court Campus (in mid-September) performing and writing songs, getting to know tutors, and working with other students. During the induction week tutors host a series of lectures and seminars that serve to introduce students to the themes of the programme. From then onwards the course is delivered using a range of tutor and student-led e-learning methods.

Like the on-site version, the 'distance learning' option is available on either a full-time study (one year) or part-time study (two year) basis and course fees are identical. Similarly, the course aims:

- To enable you to write and record songs to a professional level

- To develop critical awareness relating to your own songs and others'
- To develop your ability to perform/present your songs
- To inform you of historical and musicological developments in songwriting
- To enhance your understanding of the market value of your own work
- To provide opportunities for you to discuss current developments in songwriting with songwriters, producers and publishers
- To encourage you to develop re-writing and collaborative songwriting skills
- To help you to develop technical skills relevant to songwriting practice
- To develop your academic writing skills at 'M' level
- To guide you in planning and recording a portfolio of high-quality songs

## Teaching methods and resources

Bath Spa's approach to the teaching of songwriting combines analysis of existing repertoire with a focus on song crafting technique and students are encouraged to develop by writing new songs throughout the course. Lectures, seminars and tutorials combine to offer a range of expert and peer critique that seeks to enable the student to examine original and known works in a range of critical and technical contexts. The curriculum is supported by a Virtual Learning Environment, so course materials can be accessed from any web link.

## Faculty and Campus

The University's Corsham Court Centre has been established with an emphasis on postgraduate study, offering the space and incentive to write within a community of inspirational and imaginative artists. All instructors at Bath Spa University are practising professionals and have multi platinum selling status, representing almost every genre of popular music.

## Recording facilities

While our studio facilities are designed to enable the capture of high quality recordings, in keeping with contemporary songwriting industry practice it is anticipated that learners will become self-sufficient in the sense that, following completion of the course, they will be able to repeat the core processes of writing, planning and recording without incurring recording studio expenses. To enable mastery of the home recording process, students have access, on a first come first served basis, to laptop based 'notepad' setups and industry-standard plug-ins (Stylus, MachFive, BFD, Trilogy, Waves etc) throughout their studies. Our facilities include:

- 4 dedicated songwriting rooms, each including Apple Macs running Pro Tools, Garageband and Logic Studio.
- Dedicated performance venue, plus lighting and PA system.
- Lecture facilities.
- Selection of instruments and microphones.
- Acoustic piano and electronic keyboards.

# Modules

## Solo Songwriting

This module aims to enable students to develop critical thinking skills in relation to songwriting and to use practical songwriting and reflective writing skills to interpret, assimilate and evaluate the critique of others. Initially, students write one new song per week and perform it (live or pre-recorded) to the group. During and after performances, peer members are invited to make reflective critical notes on the song in an individual journal. Using this peer critique (supplied 'anonymously') students are asked to re-write three songs. Students continue to play rewritten songs to the group, with discussion focusing upon individual critical evaluations of the rewritten song. For assessment, students are asked to submit a 5,000 word critical journal and a 2,500 word reflective account that evaluates the rewriting process.

## History of Song

This module aims to enable students to gain knowledge and understanding of strategies used in popular songwriting and to develop the ability to place original songs within the context of that knowledge and understanding. With reference to audio examples of popular songs written between 1920 and the present day, a series of analytical lectures examines key developments in the musical, lyrical and structural development of song. Initially tutor-led lectures these become student-led seminars that

extend the analytical scope to include the individual interests of the student. For assessment, students are required to use lecture content and personal research to make observations and develop theories concerning resonances between original songs and songs written by others.

## Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Practice

This module encourages students to collaborate with each other on the Songwriting pathway, with students taking our other MMus pathways, or indeed with creative individuals outside of the course. It allows students to look beyond their core discipline and undertake interdisciplinary projects, but can also provide an opportunity to work in new ways within their core discipline through collaborative practice. Delivery centres upon small-group seminars (focused on particular interest areas), and assessment is based on a portfolio of creative work and a self-evaluation/collaborative process document.

## Context and Methodology

This module is intended to fulfil the requirements of a research methodology module. However, since a large part of the programme is practice-based, and the methodology for this aspect of students' work is covered by other modules in the programme, it is intended to combine a study of research methodology with a study of context in terms of the student's own practice – specifically of a set of paradigms that characterise the field's current, creative and industrial boundaries. The primary teaching method for this module is



a weekly lecture/seminar, with some tutorial sessions that focus on pathway specialism. Assessment will be a topic review, demonstrating an understanding of the methodologies covered by the module and an awareness of the context of the student's own practice.

## Major Project

This double module represents the culmination of the MMus, and a chance for students to work in a research-oriented environment dependent largely on personal direction and working methods. Students use the skills acquired to produce a substantial portfolio of practical creative work. The exact nature of this work is to be negotiated with the module leader, but it must represent the quantity of work required by a double module. Seeking to establish interdependence of enquiry, the module will be largely student-led, with most of the work centred upon individual practice.

## Student Profile

### **Chris Turpin** **MMus Songwriting 2010-12**

Current MMus Songwriting student, Chris Turpin, is a songwriter and musician published by Kassner Music Publishing, home to Ray Davies amongst others. Chris' band, Kill It Kid, are signed to One Little Indian Records and their eponymous debut album has been released to universal critical acclaim in the music press. Labelled 'an outstanding British record' by Clash magazine and 'Impressive stuff' by the NME who awarded it 9/10 and 8/10 respectively, Chris' songs blend delta blues and roots to striking effect, producing blistering, unapologetic rock 'n' roll one moment and a smoky film-noir ambience the next.

## Employability

MMus Songwriting is designed to enable students to develop a broad range of intellectual, practical and transferable skills. Given the practical nature of the course, it is envisaged that graduates may choose to work as a songwriter or in a related field such as music publishing. Others may use the critical skills they have acquired to work elsewhere in the music industry, perhaps for a record label or as a music journalist.

Upon graduation from the programme, it is the aim of course tutors that students will have acquired the core problem-solving, analytical and critical skills needed to adapt to the changeable and unpredictable work environment of the twenty-first century.

## Assessment methods

Assessment takes the form of individual assignments for each module. Typical assessments include audio CD, presentation, essay, and evaluative account. Assessment is continuous and there are no written exams.

## Entry requirements

We offer places on the basis of the student's experience, potential and commitment as a songwriter. Normally, but not invariably, applicants will have a first degree (or equivalent music industry experience) plus a substantial body of recorded work, equal to that which would be obtained as part of a related undergraduate course.

Applicants should submit a portfolio of work with their application comprising a four-track CD of original songs with lyrics in the English language accompanied by printed A4 lyric sheets. Applications are invited from candidates with a range of academic disciplines and from a variety of national backgrounds. Where an applicant does not have a degree, he or she is required to complete an APEL (Accreditation of Prior Learning Experience) form.



## Fees

The following fees are provisional for 2011/12 and may be subject to change. Fees are revised each year and the latest fee information can be found at [www.bathspa.ac.uk/services/finance/students/](http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/services/finance/students/)

### UK/EU students

£4,410 for the full-time MMus or £735 per module plus £1,470 for the dissertation.

### Overseas students

£9,690 for the full-time MMus

### Channel Island and Isle of Man students

As UK/EU students plus a one-off registration fee of £625 paid at the start of the course.

Fees are paid in total at the beginning of each academic year, or in instalments by standing order throughout the duration of the course. Please note that students contract to pay the fees for their full course when they register, and fees are not normally refundable. Students failing to complete their course must continue to honour any instalment plan, even in the event of a subsequent withdrawal.

## Notes

We advise you to obtain a copy of our postgraduate prospectus for full details of Bath Spa University and its programmes of study.

The contents of this leaflet are correct at the time of going to press. We will try to publicise any changes to it.

Please check the continued availability of the course and its modules before you apply by telephoning Student Services on +44 (0)1225 875875.

The operation of each course or module depends upon recruiting viable numbers. We may not be able to provide a course or module if insufficient numbers enrol. Our offer to you and your acceptance of a place here will be subject to this express condition.

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