MA Creative Production (Music)

What it is

Our Creative Production (Music) Masters of Arts course is a brand new one year practice-led research degree offered by dBs Berlin in the thriving creative hub at Funkhaus Berlin. It is an opportunity to explore your own musical ideas and artistic thinking, to refine your skills and to discover new ones, to design your own research programme, and to follow and shape your interests as they develop and flourish.

The phrase "creative production" is intentionally broad. Yes, we refer to musical production, to composition and sonic invention of other types, but we also include the production of artistic research that might take other interdisciplinary forms. The exact form your work takes will depend on your own areas of interest and on your questions. Your project could for example be interdisciplinary, navigating between different aspects of musical inquiry; for example, recording, production, composition, programming, performance, sound design, improvisation, instrument-design, sound art and field recording.

Our degree is also open to areas of investigation such as new media, sound studies, critical theory, performance and as yet unimagined forms of innovative and experimental forms of presentation. Go out of your way to surprise and delight us! In return we will offer you all the support we can for your chosen direction. We don't promise to have all the answers. On the contrary we believe that we might learn as much from you as you do from us. We do promise to go above and beyond in supporting and guiding your voyage of discovery.

How it works

Admission to this course is by research proposal. You must present us with an idea you want to spend a year exploring and developing. We will view the proposal not as something fixed but as evidence of your energy and desire and as the start of a discussion.

We do not expect you to arrive knowing exactly what you will do but that you will be hungry to explore your own interests and directions. We expect you to show initiative and inventiveness and that you will be the kind of person who does not need to be told what to do at every step.

But you will not be left alone, you will be supervised and there are taught components in the shape of workshops and seminars, which focus especially on research methods and theory. In the early stages of the degree this we will help you to refine your proposal into an personal research plan. This plan will represent the first outcome of your research, and will be followed by three sizable research projects over Semesters 1 and 2 and a larger final project in the third Semester.

The content and form of these projects will be determined, developed and explored by you with our agreement and support. A formal dissertation is not a mandatory requirement, but in most cases a written component or commentary would be expected in your final portfolio.

The teaching will be focussed mostly in informal seminars and workshops during the first and second semester and will initially give you a thorough grounding in practice-led research theory and methodology and then later in a wider range of research and writing about sound and music. This taught component is not intended to give you the answers to all your questions, but to stimulate your curiosity, to widen and deepen your frames of musical and intellectual reference, but most importantly to give you a set of tools with which to explore your own research ideas and concepts.

What we offer…..what we expect

We emphasise individual research as much as we do because there are so many different ways to engage with music, and creativity can take so many different shapes and colours. My way might not be your way, so at dBs we don't believe there should be a one size-fits all education, especially where creative production is concerned. We believe education should be a chance not only to excel but also simply to explore.

This year will be an intense experience during which you will be expected to learn and do many things. You will be part of a cohort of other international creative post-graduate students and tutors who may have very similar or quite different skills and experiences than your own. Although much of your focus will be spent working on your own independent research, there should be many opportunities to learn by exchange and collaboration. You will see your personal supervisor regularly but you will also be expected to work under your own steam, to be independent and self-reflective and to know when to ask for supervision when you need it.

So with our support, you will take an unusually large amount of responsibility for your own education, for determining your areas of interest, structuring your research questions and defining your goals. We see this sense of responsibility as an opportunity to develop your work and your being, your artistic strength and your sense of independence. We don't want you to play safe, we hope you will be prepared to show initiative, to take risks and to push your work further towards your image of where you would like it to be in the process.

Module Code	CPM1
Version	*(completed by QASU)*
Module Title	Formulate
Credits	30
Valid From	*(completed by QASU)*
Status	Proposed
Subject Board	*(completed by QASU)*
Academic Level (FHEQ)	7
Study Period	Trimester A
Prerequisites and corequisites	None
Associated programmes	Creative Production M.A
Not available to students taking/having taken	N/A

Content (Indicative)

Formulate - *express an idea in a concise and systematic way*.

This module builds upon an initial research proposal submitted at admission stage and sets the foundations for the qualification by negotiated learning. Participants engage in developing a focused research question, agenda and structure in negotiation and conversation with the module mentor. From this initial stage, participants also create a learning contract whereby detailed planning, roles, responsibilities, deadlines and project goals are agreed. This contract serves as an adaptable guide throughout the study and is revisited at the start and end of each semester.

The syllabus will typically include:

- An introduction to negotiated learning methodology
- An introduction to research methods and techniques
- Discussion surrounding learning styles and approaches
- Self assessment processes
- Development of research practices and methods
- Critical and creative idea formation, development and refinement
- Advanced planning and project management
- An overview of academic expectations, rigour and testing
- Setting out objectives and goals
- Creative risk taking techniques
- Project resourcing and allocation
- Development of planned research work for CPM2, CPM3, CPM4
- Negotiation with module mentor
- Developing project assessment criteria

Teaching and Learning Experience

Modes of Delivery: Lectures, Seminars, Tutorials, Group Discussion, Workshops.

Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

1. devise, develop and refine their own original research agenda commensurate to high level extended study demonstrating the capacity to frame and explore research questions from an interdisciplinary standpoint;
2. discuss and contextualise critical and complex issues at the forefront of their chosen discipline utilising a range of research methodologies and techniques;
3. situate their work and/or the work of others within a social, cultural, political, historical, philosophical and/or artistic context;
4. clarify tasks and make appropriate use of the capacities of group members demonstrating the ability to work effectively as either a leader or member;
5. display the ability to be an independent and self-critical learner, guiding the learning of others and managing own requirements for continuing professional development;
6. demonstrate a high level of forward thinking, planning, goal setting and organisation.

Assessment

Assessment task	Load (eg wordage)	Weighting (as a percentage)	Learning outcomes assessed
Portfolio	up to 7,500 words or equivalent	100%	LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6

Indicative reading

Books

- Mine Doğantan-Dack (eds) Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practice. Routledge 2015.
- Baden, Maggi Savin, Wimpenny, Katherine (eds) A Practical Guide to Arts-related Research. Sage 2014
- Samantha Bennett, Eliot Bates, Critical Approaches to the Production of Music and Sound, Bloomsbury Academic 2017
- Lisa M. Given. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods. Sage 2008
- IASPM@Journal Vol 7, No 2 (2017) Practice-Led and Practice-Based Popular Music Studies (International Association for the Study of Popular Music)
- George E. Lewis and Benjamin Piekut. Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies vol. 1 and 2. 2016.
- Mark J. Butler. Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music 2006

- Christopher Small. Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening. Wesleyan University Press 2011

Journals

- Journal of Interdisciplinary Music Studies Print ISSN: 1307-0401. Online ISSN: 1306-905
- IASPM@Journal (International Association for the Study of Popular Music) ISSN: 2079-3871
- The Journal on the Art of Record Production (JARP) http://arpjournal.com/ ISSN: 1754-9892
- Leonardo Music Journal ISSN: 0961-1215 (print); 1531-4812 (web)
- Journal of Popular Music Studies. ISSN, 15242226, 15331598
- Popular Music and Society ISSN, 03007766
- Popular Music. Cambridge ISSN: 0261-1430 (Print), 1474-0095 (Online)

Websites

International Computer Music Conference Proceedings
Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture
eContact! Online Journal for Electroacoustic Practices
Music Composition as Research discussion
Orpheus Institute/Norwegian Academy of Music (Oslo)

Module Code	CPM2/3/4
Version	*(completed by QASU)*
Module Title	Investigate
Credits	30
Valid From	*(completed by QASU)*
Status	Proposed
Subject Board	*(completed by QASU)*
Academic Level (FHEQ)	7
Study Period	Trimester A / Trimester B
Prerequisites and corequisites	None
Associated programmes	Creative Production M.A
Not available to students taking/having taken	N/A

Content (Indicative)

Investigate - *carry out research or study into a subject or problem*

This module focuses on practice based research, whereby the participant engages in research activity relating to the negotiated project needs set out in CPM1. This module repeats 3 times and participants will choose either a unique approach or method to be used in each repetition, or choose an iterative development methodology.

The syllabus will typically include:

- Negotiated projects briefs
- Specified technical workshops and support
- Pre-production workshops
- Documentation methods
- Presentations methods
- Group critique sessions
- One-on-one tutorials

Teaching and Learning Experience

Modes of Delivery: Lectures, Seminars, Tutorials, Group Discussion, Workshops.

Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

1. research and investigate a specified creative processes and evaluate its effect on practice;
2. identify and overcome a range of problems in a number of undefined or unpredictable contexts and environments demonstrating initiative and originality in problem solving.
3. investigate the breadth and depth of the chosen domain in order to gain a deeper contextual insight demonstrating competence in undertaking research tasks with minimum guidance ;
4. make informed judgments or arguments based on a sound application of theory, practice and/or lived experience;
5. work in flexible, creative and independent ways demonstrating autonomy, self-discipline, self-direction and reflexivity in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
6. critically reflect on their own work, or the work of others through analysis, synthesis and personal insight demonstrating advanced scholarship with an ability to argue for new or alternative approaches;

Assessment

Assessment task	Load (eg wordage)	Weighting (as a percentage)	Learning outcomes assessed
Portfolio	up to 7,500 words or equivalent	100%	LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6

Indicative reading

Books

- Farnell, Andy Designing Sound: Procedural Audio for Games and Film. Applied Scientific Press/MIT Press 1998.
- Richard James Burgess. The History of Music Production. Oxford Academic 2014
- Roger T. Dean and by Alex McLean. The Oxford Handbook of Algorithmic Music. 2018.
- Collins, N., Schedel, M., and Wilson, S. Electronic Music. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2013
- John Shepherd, Kyle Devine (eds) The Routledge Reader on the Sociology of Music. 2015.
- d'Escrivan, Julio. Music Technology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2012
- Huber, David M. and Runstein, Robert E. Modern recording techniques. 8th edn. Boston: Focal Press/Elsevier. 2013.
- Rumsey, F. and McCormick, T. Sound and recording. 6th edn. Amsterdam: Elsevier/Focal Press. 2009

- Manning, Peter. Electronic and computer music. 4th edn. New York: Oxford University Press. 2013
- Curtis Roads. The Computer Music Tutorial. MIT. 1996
- Trevor Wishart. Audible Design. A plain and easy introduction to practical sound composition. ISBN 978-0-9510313-1-5

Journals

- The Journal on the Art of Record Production (JARP)
- Contemporary Music Review ISSN 07494467
- Computer Music Journal. MIT. ISSN 0148-9267, E-ISSN 1531-5169
- Organised Sound ISSN: 1355-7718 (Print), 1469-8153 (Online)
- Leonardo Music Journal ISSN: 0961-1215 (print); 1531-4812 (web)
- Journal of Popular Music Studies. ISSN, 15242226, 15331598
- Popular Music. Cambridge ISSN: 0261-1430 (Print), 1474-0095 (Online)
- Journal of Interdisciplinary Music Studies Print ISSN: 1307-0401. Online ISSN: 1306-905

Websites

International Computer Music Conference Proceedings
Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture
eContact! Online Journal for Electroacoustic Practices
Music Composition as Research discussion
Orpheus Institute/Norwegian Academy of Music (Oslo)

Module Code	CPM5
Version	*(completed by QASU)*
Module Title	Resolve
Credits	60
Valid From	*(completed by QASU)*
Status	Proposed
Subject Board	*(completed by QASU)*
Academic Level (FHEQ)	7
Study Period	Trimester C
Prerequisites and corequisites	None
Associated programmes	Creative Production M.A
Not available to students taking/having taken	N/A

Content (Indicative)

Resolve - *settle or find a solution to a problem or a contentious matter*

Upon completion of the prior two trimesters, participants will engage in an extended and focused production period in order to complete a major masters project. The outcome of this work is the culmination of all prior learning, and will leverage the research work undertaken in the CPM2, 3 and 4 modules and be reflective of the contextual work set out in CPM1. Upon completion of the major work, participants are required to write a formal critical text.

The syllabus will typically include:

- Production workshops
- Project finishing techniques
- Distribution and marketing methods
- Engagement with industry
- Group critique sessions
- One-on-one tutorials

Teaching and Learning Experience

Modes of Delivery: Lectures, Seminars, Tutorials, Group Discussion, Workshops.

Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

1. create original work utilising highly effective production practices in creative and independent ways showing autonomy, self-discipline, self-direction and reflexivity;
2. apply advanced technical tools and methods integral to the specified production process in a highly creative manner;
3. act autonomously in planning, implementing and finalising tasks at a professional or equivalent level demonstrating originality in problem solving;
4. identify and utilise a range of appropriate communication techniques within complex professional working contexts demonstrating respect, negotiation, consideration and collaboration;
5. synthesise and explore the complex interrelationships between a range of academic texts and/or professional practices through investigating self set research questions from an interdisciplinary standpoint;
6. critically reflect on their own work through analysis, synthesis and personal insight by engaging confidently in academic and professional communication;
7. critically evaluate their own individual development and growth in relation to career goals or future professional development.

Assessment

Assessment task	Load (eg wordage)	Weighting (as a percentage)	Learning outcomes assessed
Portfolio	up to 15,000 words or equivalent	100%	LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6, LO7

Indicative reading

Books

- Nicholas Cook. Rethinking Music. Oxford University Press, 1999
- Dean, Roger (ed.) The Oxford Handbook of Computer Music. NY: Oxford University Press. 2009
- Curtis Roads. Composing Electronic Music: A New Aesthetic. 2017
- Miranda, Eduardo Reck Computer Sound Design : Synthesis Techniques and Programming. Oxford: Focal Press. 2002
- Trevor Wishart. On Sonic Art: The aesthetics of composition in a digital age. Taylor and Francis Books. 1996.
- Denis Smalley. Spectromorphology: explaining sound-shapes. Organised Sound Volume 2, Issue 2. August 1997 , pp. 107-126
- Richard James Burgess. The Art of Music Production: The Theory and Practice, 2013
- Pierre Schaeffer. In Search of a Concrete Music. Univ of California Press 2012
- Attali, Jacques. Noise: The Political Economy of Music. University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Journals

- Journal of Interdisciplinary Music Studies Print ISSN: 1307-0401. Online ISSN: 1306-905
- IASPM@Journal (International Association for the Study of Popular Music) ISSN: 2079-3871
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