Unit Title	Composition
FHEQ Level	UG 2 – L5
Unit Code	MSD18202M
Credit Value	15
Unit Type	Subject - Music Pathway

Learning Hours

Staff – Student Contact Hours		Independent Study Hours	
Classes	35	Independent Study	75
Supervised access to resources	2.5	Preparation for Assessment	12.5
		Unsupervised Access to Resources	25
Total			150

Unit Description

Composition is the primary function of the composer – whether expressed on paper, on a computer or by other means, it forms the first step in the writing musician's creative process. An important part of learning to compose involves understanding some of the key areas which culminate in the creation of a musical piece.

In this unit, students build upon the basic music theory skills developed in the unit 'Music and Sound Theory into Practice' at Level 4 and explore some of the more detailed principles of melody, harmony, rhythm, form and arrangement. Analysis of key works of past and current composers will expand their skillset with regard to their own compositions. A wide range of styles and approaches will be explored, from detailed orchestral works through to modern-day electronic productions. Students will discuss parody, pastiche and the concept of what makes a composition 'authentic', with an ultimate goal of working towards their own unique identity as composers. Songwriting will also form a key part of this unit, with exploration into lyrical, melodic, harmonic and structural choices that may be informed by the style.

The Five Principles underpin the Mindsets and Skillsets Manifesto and are the foundation upon which all course curriculum frameworks and unit specifications are based. The relevant following principles have been mapped against the Learning Outcomes relevant to each course unit and at each level. 1. Cultivate: Where the individual thrives. 2. Collaborate: where disciplines evolve. 3. Integrate: where education engages industry. 4. Advocate where purpose meets practice. 5. Originate: where creativity meets technology.

Unit Indicative Content

- Advanced music theory including modes, intervals, dynamics, cadences, complex rhythms and musical terms
- In-depth musical analysis of a wide range of musical works
- Style, genre and context
- Arrangement, instrumentation and orchestration

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- Parody and pastiche
- Songwriting – lyrics, melody, harmony, rhythm and structure

Unit Aims

- To equip the students with an advanced set of music theory skills, upon which they can draw to create more detailed and sophisticated compositions.
- To develop deeper analytical musical skills which will allow students to deconstruct more complex pieces of music, allowing them to integrate some of these practices into their own work.
- To equip students with arrangement and orchestration skills that will allow them to compose in a range of styles (including orchestral, organic and synthetic styles).
- To develop brief-writing skills which require the use of musical parody or pastiche.
- To develop songwriting skills which allow the students to compose in the context of artistry or synchronisation with media.

Unit Learning Outcomes

LO 2 Concept/Ideation
Analyse research materials leading to the generation of the ideation and concepts that inform and lead to project development.

LO 3 Development/Prototyping
Analyse a range of potential pathways that result in appropriate solutions, informed by an understanding of the principles of the creative process.

LO 4 (Pre) Production
Employ relevant knowledge of production skills alongside a grasp of the creative potential of a selection of processes, materials and methods that inform creative and academic practice.

LO 6 Critical and creative mindsets
Analyse conceptions of diverse practice and use this to inform a course of action

Learning and Teaching Methods

This unit will be delivered using a combination of:
- Lectures
- Seminars
- Briefings
- Group project work
- Individual project work
- Online learning
- Self-directed independent study

Assessment methods and tasks

More detailed assessment tasks will be specified in the brief

1. A portfolio of original compositions evidencing skills acquired as part of the unit
2. *A critically reflective report or presentation on the portfolio*

Assessment tasks	Weighting (%) *(one grade or multi-grade unit)*
1. **Composition portfolio**	80%
2. **Critical reflection**	20%

Indicative Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria are the basis on which the judgment of the adequacy of the work is made. A more detailed assessment criteria will be specified in the brief.

- IAC 1: Delivery of concept ideas which are informed by elements of a given brief (LO2).
- IAC 2: Effective development of these concept ideas into completed compositions/songs with a strong consideration of advanced music theory (LO3).
- IAC 3: Delivery of compositions/songs with full, sophisticated arrangements exploring orchestration and/or production techniques, where relevant (LO4).
- IAC 4: Reflection upon the strengths and weaknesses of the delivered portfolio with proposed improvements and developments (LO6).

Essential Reading List

1. **Barker, H. & Taylor, Y.** (2007) *Faking It: The Quest for Authenticity in Popular Music*. London: W.W. Norton & Company.
2. **Burkholder, J.P. & Grout, D. J. & Paslica, C. V.** (2014) *A History of Western Music*. 9th ed. London: W.W. Norton & Company.
3. **Cook, N.** (1992) *Guide to Musical Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
4. **Perricone, J.** (2018) *Great Songwriting Techniques*. New York: OUP USA.
5. **Peters, J.E.** (2014) *Music Composition 1: Learn how to compose well-written rhythms and melodies: Volume 1*. Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform
6. **Peters, J.E.** (2014) *Music Composition 2: Volume 2*. Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform
7. **Rimsky-Korsakov, N.** (1965) *Principles of Orchestration*. New York: Dover Publications Inc.
8. **Schoenberg, A.** (1999) *Fundamentals of Music Composition*. London: Faber & Faber.
9. **Wilkenfield, R.** (2016) *Music Theory: Simple Music Theory for Electronic Music Production*. Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.