

FACULTY OF  
**M**usic

UNDERGRADUATES



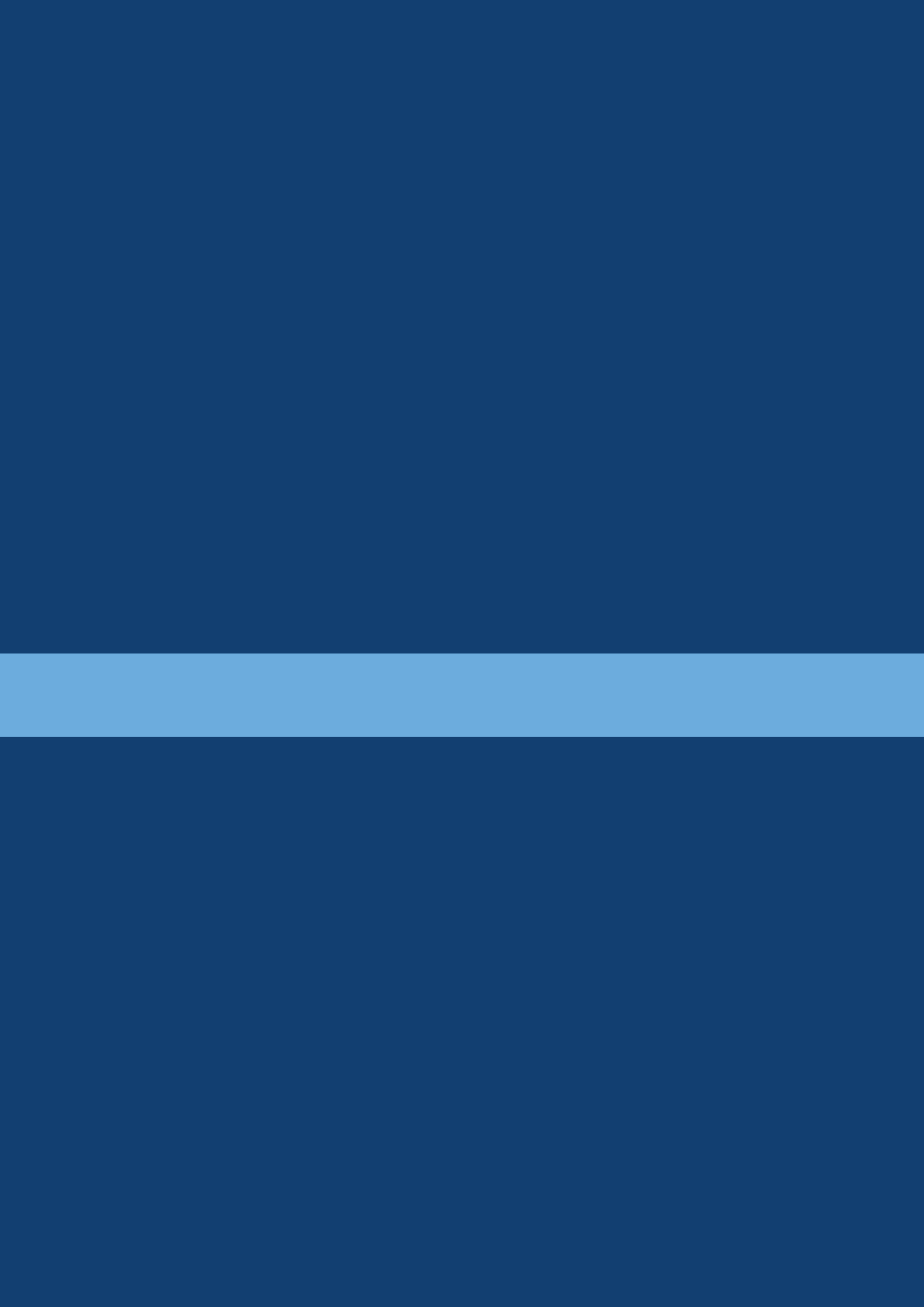
## Studying Music at Cambridge



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk)









# Contents

Why study music at University?	4
Why study music at Cambridge?	4
The course	8
Course outline	10
Sample pathways	11
A week in the life of a first year	12
Can I afford it?	14
How do I apply?	15
Beyond Cambridge	19
Frequently asked questions	20
Further information	21
Useful links	22
Contacts	22





## Why study music at university?

“

Being at Cambridge isn't just about studying for your degree – I've had a brilliant time ... playing in so many different orchestras, bands and groups is exciting, there's never a dull minute!

Marie,  
2nd year, Selwyn

”

Music is a hugely diverse field, encompassing practical and academic work, and has a bearing on history, culture, science and even people's sense of who they are. You wouldn't be reading this if you weren't fascinated by and passionate about music, but there are many different ways to further your knowledge of it. The most fundamental decision you have to make is whether to study at a university or a conservatoire. While both can involve performance, universities set it in the broader context of academic study, which means that you acquire

a large number of transferable skills that prepare you for life after university. Many music students enter the music profession in one guise or another, as performers, composers, teachers or administrators, but a music degree can prepare students for a career in almost anything, with a number each year going on to work in areas such as finance, management and law. In short, you can set yourself up for life while doing what you really want to do – and doing what you really want to do is the best way to get a good degree!

## Why study music at Cambridge?

The University of Cambridge consistently tops the league tables for its quality of teaching and research. We accept the best qualified students among you and challenge you to achieve more than you ever thought possible. The college system means that you receive complementary teaching: lectures and seminars by world-leading experts in the Faculty of Music, and small-group supervision within your chosen college. Our undergraduate programme gives you an exceptionally solid foundation in the Western classical tradition, but you will find courses in jazz, popular music and world music too. The first year

provides a broad-based introduction to the subject, while the second and third years offer increasing opportunities for specialism, including substantial self-directed projects such as dissertations, recitals and composition portfolios.

**Undergraduate admissions and link to online prospectus:**

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate)

**Faculty of Music website:**

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk)

**Order University hard-copy prospectus:**

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/publications/prospectus](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/publications/prospectus)

**The college system explained:**

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/whycambridge/explained.html](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/whycambridge/explained.html)





### The environment

With its 16 academic staff, 6 affiliated lecturers, 50 postgraduate students and approximately 200 undergraduates, the Faculty of Music lies at the heart of a vast network of musical study, research and practice. As a highly rated research centre, our expertise ranges from early music to world music, and from composition to scientific approaches; research students, postdoctoral fellows, college lecturers and distinguished international visitors work on a dizzying array of topics. We host the AHRC Research Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice (CMPCP), which brings together academic study and practical music-making. And our facilities are among the best in the country: the modern Faculty site includes a professional concert hall, the Pendlebury Music Library, and the Centre for Music and Science, with a purpose-built studio and music computing laboratories. An extensive set of period instruments is available for student use, and the Faculty also houses a Javanese Gamelan. All this is complemented by the libraries, practice rooms and other facilities available in colleges, as well as by the University Library – one of the world’s great libraries – housing over seven million volumes.

### Opportunities for performers

You can study performance as part of your degree programme, and one

of the most outstanding features of Cambridge is the richness and diversity of its music-making at all levels. In addition to our professional concert series, we host a number of resident ensembles: the Endellion String Quartet, Britten Sinfonia and Academy of Ancient Music not only perform regularly but also offer masterclasses and composition workshops for students. Within the Faculty, performance opportunities range from our Collegium Musicum (a period-instrument ensemble), New Music Ensemble and Handel Opera Group to the gamelan orchestra.

At college level, much of the musical activity centres on the Chapel choirs; to include world-famous, quasi-professional ensembles directed by conductors with international reputations as well as smaller groups led by students. Instrumental music is also well served: CUMS (the Cambridge University Music Society) works with conductors of the calibre of Sir Roger Norrington and composers such as Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, while CUCO (the Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra) also performs regularly with well-known guest conductors. Most of all it is the wealth of student-led music-making that makes Cambridge so special. There are more than 30 University music societies to join, including chamber music groups, opera, music theatre, jazz and world

“

Being a composer at Cambridge really is a fantastic experience with numerous opportunities for performances.

”

**Toby,**  
3rd year, King’s

### Faculty of Music academic and related staff:

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk/people/academicstaff](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/people/academicstaff)

### CMPCP:

[www.cmcp.ac.uk](http://www.cmcp.ac.uk)

### West Road Concert Hall:

[www.westroad.org](http://www.westroad.org)

### Pendlebury Library of Music:

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk/pendlebury](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/pendlebury)

### Centre for Music and Science:

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk/CMS](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/CMS)

### Cambridge University Library:

[www.lib.cam.ac.uk](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk)





“

I volunteered regularly for CAMEO. It's a great way of switching off from the pressures of studying which sometimes pile up, and it's a really great way of using music in a practical, fun and different way during your time at Cambridge!

Joe,  
3rd year, Corpus Christi

”

music societies, not to mention the many college societies. The result, as you can see from the CamMuso website, is one of the most vibrant musical environments in the world.

#### **Opportunities for composers**

The flourishing music scene in Cambridge provides numerous opportunities for composers to promote their work. Besides the opportunity to study composition as part of the degree programme, the Faculty arranges regular workshops, including some featuring visiting composers, hosts an annual study day with members of the Britten Sinfonia, and supports the Cambridge University New Music Ensemble, which performs contemporary works by students and established composers. In association with the Faculty, Kettle's Yard also promotes new composition by students and supports a New Music Associate who frequently works with student composers.

You will also benefit from access to a recording studio comprising a state-of-the-art control room and an acoustically treated recording room. High-powered computers run a wide range of music production software, including Digidesign Pro Tools and Sadie 5. Introductory sessions on studio techniques are held periodically for anyone who wants to learn, and everyone has the opportunity to record

their performances in the West Road Concert Hall.

#### **Opportunities for community engagement**

The Faculty has an active outreach programme which covers everything from week-long summer schools to music-making in the community. CaMEO (Cambridge Music Education Outreach) offers volunteering opportunities so you can share your talent with the public and develop more skills to add to your CV. Examples of just some of the projects you could get involved with include performing in local hospitals, taking practical music-making workshops out to schools, large-scale public festival events and GCSE composition masterclasses.

#### **Musical life at Cambridge:**

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk/musicatcambridge](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/musicatcambridge)

#### **Profiles of resident ensembles:**

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk/musicatcambridge/themusical-environment/residencies](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/musicatcambridge/themusical-environment/residencies)

#### **CamMuso:**

[www.cammuso.org.uk](http://www.cammuso.org.uk)

#### **Music Outreach:**

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk/outreach](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/outreach)

#### **Kettle's Yard:**

[www.kettlesyard.co.uk](http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk)

#### **Faculty recording studio:**

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk/CMS/about/facilities](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/CMS/about/facilities)









# The Course

## What will I be taught?

Our undergraduate course (or Tripos) is designed to introduce you not just to a range of music, but to a wide variety of ways of thinking about and understanding music. At first the focus is on the skills you need for university-level music studies, giving you a solid grounding in the techniques and history of the Western musical tradition, as well as an understanding of the many roles music plays in today's world. As you progress through your studies, you have increasing freedom to take specialised courses in different kinds of music, or approaches to it. Though the course has a strong academic component, you can choose to study performance and composition in all three years, and you can choose to spend most of your final year working with individual staff members on your own analytical, historical or compositional projects.

To go into a little more detail, the first year (called part IA) comprises four major components:

## Year 1: Part IA

### Historical and critical studies, approached from several complementary perspectives

Lectures introduce you to basic issues involved in understanding the music of the past; to the variety of musics in today's world and their social contexts; and to a selection of historical case studies, illustrating how different kinds of historical evidence can be brought together into a critical understanding of the music in question. Complementing these classes is a carefully structured programme of listening and reading designed to give you a mental map of music's past and present, together with first-hand experience of a wide range of repertory. An important feature of this component is that many staff members contribute in their own areas of expertise, so you get a sense of those areas of the curriculum that you may not have previously encountered. There is much to cover, and so the critical and historical studies component of the curriculum continues into the second year.

### Elements of tonal music

'Tonal' music encompasses not only the classics from Bach to Brahms but also contemporary media music and pop: understanding its techniques both opens up a huge musical repertory and gives you a starting point for understanding other traditions. We see this as an essential foundation for more advanced studies in all areas of music, and again approach it through complementary perspectives including arrangement, acquisition of basic harmonic skills at the keyboard, aural work, and writing music in a range of historical styles. This component of the curriculum, too, continues into the second year, culminating in an applied project where you bring together everything you have learned about tonal music, such as a large-scale orchestral arrangement or adding a sound track to a film.

### Music analysis

Whether you play music, write it, or write about it, you need to understand what makes it work, and analysis gives you this understanding, rather as you might strip down a car engine to understand how it works. This component of the programme builds on the tonal techniques component to give you hands-on familiarity with music in a wide range of styles, and in this way creates a bridge between your work in tonal techniques and in historical and critical studies. Again, because it is so important in enabling you to engage musically with music, this component continues into the second year.

### Music and musicology today

This final component of the first-year curriculum allows you pursue your own work under staff direction: the options are preparing a 15-minute recital on your chosen instrument or voice, submitting a portfolio of compositions (if you haven't composed before, this will give you the chance to try it out), or writing an extended essay on a subject of your choice. This component of the curriculum helps prepare you for the core extended projects in performance, composition, or writing about music that you can choose in subsequent years.





## Year 2: Part IB

In the second year (Part IB), you complete the core courses in historical studies, techniques of tonal music, and music analysis. That takes up half your time; for the other half you choose three from a range of different courses. These include performance studies (where you can offer a 25-minute recital), advanced keyboard skills, composition, and a dissertation. There are also more advanced historical and critical courses, which change from year to year, in line with staff research interests, and to keep them at the cutting edge of musicological knowledge. In addition there are courses in areas such as jazz and popular music, ethnomusicology (or 'world music'), and the important growth area of scientific approaches to music; here, too, the specific content of the courses changes from year to year. To increase the flexibility of the course selection we may allow you to take one third-year course in your second year and vice versa.

## Year 3: Part II

The third year (Part II) gives you even more choice. There are no compulsory courses; it is up to you to design your own programme of study from the wide selection of options on offer, in line with your interests and also with the skills and knowledge you will need for your chosen career path. There are third-year options in all the core areas taught in the second year, together with a range of more advanced specialisms; to give you an idea of what to expect, the text box lists some of the second- and third-year options offered in recent years. If you wish, you can spend most of this year working with individual staff members on your own projects, whether as an advanced performer, composer, historian, analyst, ethnomusicologist, or music scientist. In this way, while our programme gives you the solid understanding of the subject which a music degree should guarantee, it also offers the flexibility you need to prepare yourself for life after Cambridge.





# Course Outline

## Sample Pathways

### Composer

#### Part Ia

1. Composition option in Music and Musicology Today  
Compulsory papers 2–6

#### Part Ib

- Compulsory papers 1–3
4. Composition Portfolio
5. Keyboard Skills
6. Introduction to Music and Science

#### Part II

1. Advanced Tonal Skills
2. Advanced Keyboard Skills
3. The Spirituality of Pop Music
4. Aesthetics of Music
5. Analysis Portfolio
6. Dissertation

### Performer

#### Part Ia

1. Recital option in Music and Musicology Today  
Compulsory papers 2–6

#### Part Ib

- Compulsory papers 1–3
4. Introduction to Performance Studies
5. Keyboard Skills
6. Britten: Music and Words

#### Part II

1. Advanced Performance
2. Advanced Keyboard Skills
3. Studying Music as Performance
4. Perception and Performance
5. The Music of Chopin
6. Dissertation

### Year one: Part Ia

1. Music and Musicology Today (lectures plus a choice of recital, composition or extended essay)
2. Historical Studies 1 (Medieval, Renaissance & Baroque)
3. Historical Studies 2 (Classical & Romantic)
4. Introduction to Music Analysis
5. Tonal Skills 1 (harmony & counterpoint)
6. Tonal Skills 2 (aural & practical keyboard skills)

### Year two: Part Ib

1. Historical Studies (20th century)
2. Music Analysis
3. Applied and Tonal Skills (stylistic composition, orchestration/arrangement, film score)

For papers 4, 5 & 6 choose three papers from:

- Introduction to Performance Studies (inc. recital)
- Composition Portfolio
- Dissertation
- Keyboard Skills
- and a range of topics from a list that changes annually:
  - **2010–11 topics**  
Notation; Encounters in Balinese Music; Music and Society in Handel's London; The Mighty Handful and its Legacy; American Jazz c.1940–c.1970; Introduction to Music and Science; Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis
  - **2011–12 topics**  
Notation; Nationalism and Music in the Middle East; Wagner; Benjamin Britten: Music and Words; Introduction to Music and Science; Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis





## Year three: Part II

For all papers (1–6), choose six papers from:

- Advanced Performance (including recital)
  - Notation and Source Studies Portfolio
  - Advanced Tonal Skills
  - Advanced Keyboard Skills
  - Analysis portfolio
  - Dissertation
  - and a range of topics from a list that changes annually:
- **2010–11 topics:**  
Fugue; Don Giovanni; Beethoven: the Late String Quartets; The Music of Miles Davis; Perception and Performance; German Idealist Operas c.1860–1940; The Music of Chopin; Globalisation; The Music and Musical Sources of Guillaume de Machaut; Studying Music as Performance; Choral Performance
  - **2011–12 topics:**  
Don Giovanni; Beethoven: the Late String Quartets; The Music of Miles Davis; Perception and Performance; Monteverdi in Mantua and Venice; The Music of Chopin; The Spirituality of Pop Music; The Music and Musical Sources of Guillaume de Machaut; Studying Music as Performance; Aesthetics of Music

## Sample Pathways

### Early Music

#### Part Ia

1. Extended essay option in Music and Musicology Today  
Compulsory papers 2–6

#### Part Ib

- Compulsory papers 1–3
4. Notation
  5. Music and Society in Handel's London
  6. Dissertation

#### Part II

1. Notation and Source Studies Portfolio
2. The Music and Musical Sources of Guillaume de Machaut
3. Monteverdi in Mantua and Venice
4. Dissertation
5. Analysis Portfolio
6. Don Giovanni

### Opera

#### Part Ia

1. Extended essay option in Music and Musicology Today  
Compulsory papers 2–6

#### Part Ib

- Compulsory papers 1–3
4. Introduction to Performance Studies
  5. Music and Society in Handel's London
  6. The Mighty Handful and its Legacy

#### Part II

1. Advanced Performance
2. Analysis Portfolio
3. Monteverdi in Mantua and Venice
4. Don Giovanni
5. German Idealistic Opera c. 1860–1940
6. Dissertation





## How will I be taught?

“

I like the fact that there is simply so much to do; one could never complain of lack of opportunity!

**Kate,  
Postgrad Student,  
King's**

”

What makes the Cambridge system so special is the complementary relationship between Faculty and college teaching. Faculty teaching takes the form of lectures and seminars. Lectures provide you with the basis upon which you can build your own self-directed study and are for all students from all colleges. Seminars are less formal; they rely heavily on student participation and you will be required to contribute to discussions.

Supervisions are organised by colleges and students often regard them as the most rewarding and beneficial part of the Cambridge experience. They typically involve just two or three students, take place weekly, and last around an hour. You normally prepare an essay or another piece of work for a supervision, but you are not formally assessed on it: this means that you can try things out, take risks, explore new approaches and clarify aspects of the topic about which you are unsure. A more detailed explanation of the supervision system can be found on the University website.

### **Some former students**

With so much on offer, it's not surprising that over recent decades many of the most significant figures in British music have studied at Cambridge. They include conductors: Sir Andrew Davis, Sir Mark Elder, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, and Edward Gardner; instrumentalists and vocalists: Joanna MacGregor, Susan Tomes, Robert Tear and Thomas Trotter;

composers: Judith Weir, George Benjamin and Thomas Adès; leading figures in the music industry: Ray Dolby and Tony Wilson; and too many distinguished musicologists, ethnomusicologists and critics to list individually.



## A Week in the life of a first-year music student at Jesus College

Monday		Thursday	
09.00	Counterpoint Supervision at the Music Faculty	07.30	Up early to try and finish work for a supervision later on
09.45	Try to read in the faculty library but end up practising keyboard in the back room instead	09.30	Keyboard skills practice
11.30	19 <sup>th</sup> Century Lecture	10.00	Aural Class
13.00	Back to Jesus for lunch in caff (hall), nice to see everyone.	11.30	Analysis Lecture
14.00	19 <sup>th</sup> Century Supervision	13.00	Home for lunch
15.00	Have a break with biscuits over Facebook	15.00	Analysis Supervision
17.00	Work on an 18 <sup>th</sup> -century opera essay	16.00	Check emails and start Harmony for tomorrow
20.00	JCMS (College orchestra) rehearsal in the chapel. After an hour of Haydn I'm back to the essay earlier than expected as no trumpets in Stravinsky's Dumbarton Oaks. Biscuits in the break were good though.	18.30	Dinner in caff
22.15	Go to the pub with a friend from home and two others who are doing music at Clare College.	19.30	CUWO (University Wind Orchestra) rehearsal at the Faculty (Short Ride in a Fast Machine still needs more practice...)
		22.30	Quick visit to the pub (a different one)
Tuesday		Friday	
09.00	Emails	09.00	Harmony work for later
10.00	18 <sup>th</sup> -Century Opera Lecture	12.00	Aural Class
11.30	Break. Chat and search for a book in the library.	13.00	A group of us from Aural have lunch together at Newnham College
12.00	Counterpoint Lecture	14.00	Harmony Supervision
13.00	Back to Jesus for lunch	15.15	Emails and a bit of reading for an essay on Dvořák
14.00	Analysing and writing an essay on the Bb Major Prelude and Fugue from WTC Book I	17.15	Choir rehearsal
19.30	CUMS I (Cambridge University Music Society's symphony orchestra) rehearsal at the Faculty	19.00	Catch up with my Dad on the phone and school friend on skype
22.30	Go to the pub with the other trumpet and the double bass section.	20.00	Dinner in front of iPlayer
		21.00	Bit more reading
Wednesday		Saturday	
06.15	Rowing outing	10.30	Rowing outing
08.30	Crew member who slept through his alarm clock and delayed the outing buys us all breakfast in caff, excellent end to a good outing.	13.00	Brunch in caff
09.30	Harmony Lecture	14.30	Reading for Dvořák essay
11.30	Keyboard Supervision	16.30	Nice practice room is free so spend an hour mixing trumpet and keyboard skills practice.
12.00	Aural Class	17.30	Plan and start writing essay
13.00	Counterpoint Supervision	18.30	Dinner in caff
13.30	Back to college for lunch	19.00	Meet friends to go and see the musical Rent at the ADC Theatre, the co-director and musical director are second year students at Jesus.
14.30	Refreshing effects of rowing outing have now well and truly worn off and lunch combines with not enough sleep to make analysis work heavy going.		
17.00	Choir at Corpus (rehearsal followed by dinner and then evensong)	Sunday	
20.00	Walk back to Jesus with my college mother, a 2 <sup>nd</sup> year music student. Chat about her dissertation topic, Mahler song cycles, and the football scores.	09.00	Choir rehearsal followed by service
20.15	Back to analysis with more success	11.00	Breakfast for all those at the service
21.30	Chat to my upstairs neighbour before a bit of practice for tomorrow's rehearsal	12.00	Emails and practice
		14.00	Our boat go and do a training session on the rowing machines ('ergs')
		14.45	Work on the essay, enjoying picking out musical examples (very grateful that listening to music counts as work)
		16.30	Choir rehearsal and service
		19.00	Drinks in the Master's Lodge for all those at the service followed by optional formal dinner (free for the choir)
		21.30	Choir party begins with more food and drink in someone's room (their neighbours come and join in)
		23.30	Most of us move onto a club
		02.00	Cheesy chips from the Trailer of Life in Market Sqaure





## Can I afford it?

Along with the other leading UK universities, Cambridge will charge £9,000 tuition fees for UK/EU students in 2012–13. The University also has some of the most extensive undergraduate bursary schemes in the UK to ensure that no one is prevented from coming here for financial reasons. And in other respects studying at Cambridge is cheaper than you'd think. Here are some reasons why:

- College accommodation is offered for the duration of the degree programme, with heating, cleaning, internet access and limited self-catering facilities included.
- You won't have to pay market rates or large deposits.
- Colleges offer meals at highly subsidised prices.
- Cambridge is small, so transport is cheap or free (you can walk or cycle nearly everywhere).
- Many social activities are college-based and student-run, so are very cheap and there are plenty of free or cheap sports facilities.
- Well-stocked libraries, good secondhand bookshops and up-to-date IT provision help to keep costs low.

### What help is available?

There are a number of different sources of funding available for students. We advise you to look at the fees and finance section of the Undergraduate Admissions website and the government website on student finances for the most up-to-date financial information. However, the main sources of funding are listed below:

- Government student loans and means-tested maintenance grants for fees and living costs.
- Cambridge Bursaries: these supplement the government maintenance grants and are means-tested.
- National Scholarship Programme: fee waivers for students from low-income households.
- College awards: these are mainly to support your studies (e.g. book and equipment grants). Details of these can be found on the individual college websites.

### Awards for performers

These are special awards organised at a college level for choral and organ scholars, and for other instrumentalists, which offer a small payment and benefits such as tuition and professional coaching.

### Choral and organ awards

Almost every college in Cambridge has a chapel, and student organists and choristers commit regular hours of practice to provide the music for regular chapel services, college concerts (with a much wider range of music) and tours around the world. Application deadlines are before the UCAS deadlines so make sure you check these on the music awards website.

### Instrumental awards

These enable gifted players to reach a high standard of performance in chamber music, and award-holders are expected to rehearse regularly with their ensembles. Players of violin, viola, cello, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, french horn and piano can apply, and you need a distinction at ABRSM Grade 8 or equivalent to be eligible. Applications are submitted after the offer of an academic place has been made, and auditions take place before the start of the Cambridge term.

### Student fees and finance:

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/finance](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/finance)

### Government student finance guide:

[www.direct.gov.uk/StudentFinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/StudentFinance)

### Cambridge music awards:

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/musicawards](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/musicawards)





## How do I apply?

Applying to Cambridge is slightly different to most other universities, mainly because applications for undergraduate admission are dealt with by the colleges, not the Faculty of Music. You'll find the main points here, but there is additional guidance on the University's Undergraduate Admissions website, including an applicant toolkit with support for interviews and advice on developing your study skills.

One thing needs saying at the start: there is no such thing as a 'Cambridge type'. Each applicant is assessed individually, the aim being to admit those students who can benefit most from what we have to offer, irrespective of their background. People studying here come from all parts of the UK and the world beyond: what they have in common is that they are bright and willing to be challenged.

### The colleges

Before you apply to a college you need to decide which suits you best. The University and Music Faculty websites offer guidance on this and the colleges also all have their own websites, some with special pages on music applications. Colleges have more similarities than differences but things you might like to consider when choosing a college are size, location, type of buildings and facilities. Visiting colleges on their open days is a great way to get a feel for where you would

be most comfortable during your time at Cambridge. But if after all this you have not found any particular reason to choose one college over another, you can make an open application – the college you are allocated to will treat you just the same as those who have applied directly to it.

### Entry requirements

Each application is considered on its merits and all colleges modify offers to take account of individual circumstances, for example if a student is applying under the Cambridge Special Access Scheme, but typical offers are:

- A level: A\*AA, IB – 7.7.7 or 7.7.6 in Higher Levels and a total score of 40–42
- Scottish Advanced Highers: AAB or AAA
- Irish Leaving Certificate: AAAAA at Higher Level
- Welsh Baccalaureate: offers are not based on the overall Baccalaureate award, but on the 3 A levels taken as part of the Advanced Diploma.

Details of offers for other examination systems and overseas qualifications can be found on the Undergraduate Admissions pages of the University website.

If you have taken A levels, the essential requirement is normally A level Music

“

The quality of student performances is extremely high, and the variety of music put on caters to every taste (and because concerts are so cheap, you can try something new...)

”

**Sasha,  
1st year, Girton**

**Entrance requirements:**  
[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/requirements](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/requirements)

**University study opportunities:**  
[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions)

**Undergraduate applicant toolkit:**  
[www.cam.ac.uk/applicant-toolkit](http://www.cam.ac.uk/applicant-toolkit)

**Guidance on choosing a college:**  
[www.cam.ac.uk/choosingacollege](http://www.cam.ac.uk/choosingacollege)

**Colleges' web pages for music admissions:**  
[www.mus.cam.ac.uk/applicants/undergraduate/colleges](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/applicants/undergraduate/colleges)



“

I had so much fun at my subject interview! It was probably the most in-depth conversation I'd ever had with anyone about music, and I actually learned a lot!

Emma,  
3rd year, Fitzwilliam

”

and A levels in two other academic subjects. The choice of subjects is not critical, and humanities subjects, languages and sciences are all good choices.

Finally, we expect you to have some familiarity with the Western classical repertoire, and to have some experience of writing about music. A well developed musical ear, basic facility at the keyboard, and some knowledge of harmony are also desirable, though few successful applicants have equal facility in all these areas.

#### **Cambridge special access scheme (CSAS)**

This scheme is designed to ensure that applicants who have experienced particular personal, social or educational disadvantage can be accurately assessed.

You are eligible for the scheme if either of the following apply:

- Few people from your school or college continue to higher education AND your family has little or no tradition of studying for a degree
- Your education has been significantly disrupted or disadvantaged through health or personal problems, disability or difficulties with schooling.

- To be considered under this scheme you apply in the normal way, but your referee should also complete the additional special access scheme form (available online). Contact the Cambridge Admissions Office or a college admissions office for more details.

#### **Forms**

The application process for Cambridge starts earlier than for most other UK universities, but thereafter is the same. Make sure you check all the dates and deadlines on the Undergraduate Admissions office website to leave yourself plenty of time.

You must submit a UCAS application online by 15 October. You need to include the institution code for the University of Cambridge (CAM C05), and the course code for music (W300). You also need to include the campus code, which corresponds to your choice of college (or an open application); this can be found on the individual college websites or in the Undergraduate Prospectus. You will be asked to complete a Supplementary Application Questionnaire (SAQ) after your UCAS application has been received. You will probably also be asked to provide some examples of your academic work, for instance essays or compositions.

#### **Other examination systems and international qualifications:**

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/requirements](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/requirements)

#### **Cambridge special access scheme:**

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/apply/csas.html](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/apply/csas.html)

#### **SAQ information:**

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/apply/saq.html](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/apply/saq.html)

#### **Music admission tests and written work:**

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/music/tests.html](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/music/tests.html)

#### **Interviews at Cambridge:**

[www.cam.ac.uk/interviews](http://www.cam.ac.uk/interviews)





## Interviews

The interview is the part of the application process that candidates worry about most. The prospect of an interview may sound daunting, especially if you have never had one before, but every effort is made to put you at your ease.

There is no set list of interview questions and every interview will be slightly different, but it will be more like an informal discussion than a question-and-answer session. There is a University web page on this, but in brief, the interviewer will probably want to talk about your personal statement and any work you have submitted. You may be asked to respond to some previously unseen material, for example a piece of writing or a score, and some colleges will ask you to do a written test. The interviewer won't have a preconceived idea of 'right or wrong answers', but will simply try to find out how you think and talk about music. The point of the interview is to assess whether Cambridge is right for you, so the best thing you can do is relax and be yourself. And remember that interviews are just one part of the admissions process.

“

I will honestly say that I enjoyed my interview and I came out smiling, despite the fact that I went in petrified!

”

**Marie,  
recent graduate, St  
Johns**









## Beyond Cambridge

Cambridge music graduates are extremely attractive to employers. They have the capacity to absorb and retain complex information whilst working independently; they are also used to balancing multiple commitments under pressure. Their presentation skills and resourcefulness are enhanced by the supervision system, through which they learn to think on their feet.

Essay preparation encourages students to have a flexible and open mind whilst honing their ability to think and structure an argument logically and critically, synthesise material rapidly, and write persuasively and concisely. And mastery of these skills makes graduates who can lead and organise, as well as listen. In short they are great at working with people, so it's not surprising that our music graduates have a high success rate in the job market.

A number of recent graduates have gone on to be very successful in the music world: performers include pianist

Tom Poster (who made two separate appearances in the 2009 Proms) and singer Andrew Kennedy (who, like Tom Poster, is one of the BBC's New Generation Artists); composers include Cheryl Frances Hoad and Sasha Siem, both of whom have received major commissions; conductors such as Robin Ticciati (now the Principal Conductor of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra) and Rory Macdonald (until recently Assistant Conductor of the Hallé Orchestra) are building impressive portfolios, while Chris Mundy is now an MD for music theatre productions. Other recent graduates have pursued successful careers in publishing and the media; these include Sara Mohr-Pietsch, now a Radio 3 presenter (she also presented the 2009 Proms on television), and Kim Townsend, whose radio production course in HMP Brixton has won two Sony radio awards. Our graduates also follow very successful careers in other disciplines such as arts administration, investment banking, law, public service and the charity sector.

“

As well as studying one of the best music courses in the country, there are so many extracurricular opportunities here; whatever your interests, there is every chance for a very fulfilling work-life balance

”

**Emma,  
3rd Year, Fitzwilliam**



## Frequently asked questions

### **I haven't taken A level music but I have ABRSM grade 8 theory; can I still apply to Cambridge?**

Yes. All colleges will consider an application with Grade 8 theory instead of A level music.

### **I study music technology instead of music; can I still apply to Cambridge?**

Not normally. Because of the nature of our curriculum, we are happy to accept A level Music Technology as a supplement to A level Music, but not as a substitute for it. However, individual colleges assess each application on its merits, and those responsible for admissions are always willing to discuss special circumstances.

### **Do I have to have Grade 5 piano? What if I haven't studied harmony and counterpoint?**

Our teaching takes account of individual abilities, and for this reason we don't impose absolute requirements. Some ability to play the piano is helpful, and if you have the option to take A level harmony and counterpoint elements we would recommend that you do so. All this will increase your preparedness for our programme.

### **What if I have taken the I.B. or other qualifications instead of A levels?**

The majority of applicants apply with

A levels, but other school/national examinations at an equivalent level (such as Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers, Irish Leaving Certificate, Welsh Baccalaureate, French Baccalaureate, German Abitur, Italian Maturita, and International Baccalaureate) are also acceptable, and details of the entry requirements for these can be found online at the Admissions Office pages of the University website. If in doubt you can check that the qualifications you are taking provide an appropriate preparation for study at Cambridge by contacting the Cambridge Admissions Office.

### **Do you accept VCE, Applied A levels, GNVQs and BTECs?**

Not normally. VCE A levels, Applied A levels, GNVQs and/or BTECs are not ideal preparation for most Cambridge courses, where the emphasis is more academic than vocational. As such, these qualifications will not normally be accepted in place of either A level or ABRSM grade 8 theory, but may be accepted as an additional fourth broadening subject. Potential applicants taking these qualifications should seek further advice from a college admissions tutor.

### **What factors do I need to consider when choosing my college?**

It depends on you and what you are looking for. We suggest you take the following into account: age, your

gender, size, facilities and location. Don't agonise about it for too long - there are more similarities than differences between colleges and most students settle in and enjoy their college wherever they end up. If you really can't make a decision, you can consider an open application.

### **Will my choice of college affect my chances of getting in?**

Some colleges attract many more applications than others. But the colleges all look for the same basic characteristics in a successful applicant, and there is a pooling system. As a result, when a college can't accept a strong application, it is passed to another college that can.

### **Will I get a piano in my room?**

All colleges normally provide either a piano or a keyboard in the rooms of their music students. You should check with the college you are applying to for more details about their provision for music students.

### **Do you provide instrumental tuition?**

For students taking performance options support of up to £500 is provided to help towards the cost of instrumental or vocal tuition. Students who are not taking any performance options may still be eligible for financial support. Check with individual colleges for the exact figures

### **Open days and events:**

[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/events](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/events)

### **Music events and open days:**

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk/outreach/cambridge/secondary-schools-and-colleges](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/outreach/cambridge/secondary-schools-and-colleges)





### **How many practice rooms are there?**

The Faculty doesn't have designated practice rooms because these facilities are provided by colleges. However, Faculty teaching rooms (including the large recital room and the concert hall) can be booked for individual or group rehearsals when not in use for other purposes.

### **Will I get to perform as part of the course?**

Yes, if you choose to. You can offer performance as part of your assessment in all three years. However, even if you don't opt for this, performing can take up much of your time here. There is a huge number of music societies and ensembles active in the University, with at least one concert taking place somewhere virtually every night, so you will never be without an opportunity to perform.

### **I'm applying as an international student, where can I find information about the process for me?**

Cambridge attracts many well qualified applicants from all around the world and as a result holds interviews in a number of centres outside the UK. The University website has a special section for international applicants, including information about entrance requirements, the admissions process and important financial information

that should explain everything you need to know to make a good application. If you have further questions, contact the admissions tutor at your chosen college for more advice.

### **I'm over 21. Does that make a difference?**

We welcome mature students, and four of the colleges specialise in admitting students like you. Our links section includes a University website with further information.

### **What if I have a disability?**

Like any other student, you can thrive here. Every effort will be made to provide a suitable and supportive learning environment for you. The Disability Resource Centre (DRC) is an essential first point of contact. They can provide you with advice on the proximity and accessibility of colleges in relation to the Music Faculty, and information on the support available to you; they may even be able to put you in touch with a student who has a disability similar to yours, so that you can find out about their experiences here. We recommend that you disclose your disability in your UCAS application so that you can be contacted to arrange any special requirements for interviews.

### **I'm interested. What do I do next?**

Explore the Faculty, college, and University websites and read the

University Prospectus. Come to one of the Cambridge Open Days in early July. If you like what you see, that will leave you plenty of time to get your application in by 15 October.

### **Have an unanswered question?**

You can contact us on [outreach@mus.cam.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@mus.cam.ac.uk) and we will do our best to answer your questions or put you in touch with someone who can.

### **Want to see what the University is like yourself?**

There are also opportunities for you to experience life at Cambridge for yourself. Your school may be able to organise a visit or you may be eligible for one of the Summer Schools. For more information about opportunities to visit the University, take a look at the open days and events pages on the University Admissions Office website and on the Faculty of Music outreach pages.



## Useful links

We hope you now have a sense of what it is like to study Music at Cambridge, and what you need to do to make it happen. However, we recognise that everybody is different and there may be further information you'd like, based on your individual interests or circumstances. You'll find answers to some frequently asked questions, together with details of how you can ask an individual question if you can't find what you are looking for here. We've also provided links to websites which you can explore for further information.

### Music

**Faculty of Music:** [www.mus.cam.ac.uk](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk)

**Music awards:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/musicawards](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/musicawards)

### University admissions

**Application process:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/apply](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/apply)

**Links to college websites:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/colleges](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/colleges)

**Undergraduate admissions:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate)

**Mature students:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/mature](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/mature)

**International students:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/international](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/international)

**Students with a disability:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/disabilities](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/disabilities)

**Entrance requirements:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/requirements](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/requirements)

**Interviews at Cambridge:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/interviews](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/interviews)

**Subject choice guidelines:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/music/requirements.html](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/music/requirements.html)

**Downloadable University prospectus:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/publications](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/publications)

**Cambridge Special Access Scheme (pdf):** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/apply/forms/csas.pdf](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/apply/forms/csas.pdf)

### Students

**Students' Union:** [www.cusu.cam.ac.uk/prospective](http://www.cusu.cam.ac.uk/prospective)

**Student societies:** [www.societies.cam.ac.uk](http://www.societies.cam.ac.uk)

### Events

**Faculty open days:** [www.mus.cam.ac.uk/outreach/cambridge/secondary-schools-and-colleges](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk/outreach/cambridge/secondary-schools-and-colleges)

**University open days and events:** [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/events](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/events)



# Contact

**Outreach Officer**

Faculty of Music  
University of Cambridge  
11 West Road  
Cambridge CB3 9DP

Tel: 01223 768927

Fax: 01223 335067

[www.mus.cam.ac.uk](http://www.mus.cam.ac.uk)

