

CORE MODULES: BA (Hons) Performing Arts

You must take modules worth 120 credits at each level of the course. Each module is worth a specified number of credits.

Year one for full-time students (Level 4)

Staging and Reception (15 credits)

- *This module focusses on the staging and reception of live performance, through analysis of contemporary performance events and practical explorations of a range of performance styles, staging conventions and thematic concerns. Through theory and practice you engage with questions about how we create meaning on stage, and how these meanings are read and multiplied by an audience in the moment of reception. You are introduced to the discipline of performance analysis, and you learn to apply a semiotic reading to your interpretation of live performance. This will be assessed through a written analysis of one of a selection of theatre shows, visits to which are scheduled early in the semester. You then engage in a series of practical workshops exploring a range of performance elements, such as space, the body and interactivity, through experimental inclass staging of a range of source texts.*

Performance Contexts 1A (15 credits)

- *This module aims to provide you with an introductory understanding of the historical and cultural development of performance through exploration of a range of practical and critical material, particularly focusing on the early to mid-twentieth century. To do this, we will consider key movements and important practitioners across the field of performing arts. You will be asked to examine performance works within their particular historical, social, cultural and political contexts. Through engaging with selected works, you will be introduced to a variety of theoretical approaches to the study of the performing arts, examining changes in form and conventions in performance.*

Performance Skills 1A (15 credits)

- *In this module you develop your knowledge and understanding of the foundational principles underlying acting, through an introduction to skills relating, predominantly, to naturalist and realist forms. The focus is on a practical introduction to mainstream acting techniques in a contemporary context. These techniques are explored and interrogated through a combination of various exercises, including improvisation and text-based work. You are also encouraged to think about the practices explored from a critical perspective. A key feature of the module is the workshop-based approach, which emphasises 'learning through doing', integrating ideas with creative exploration.*

Digital Performance (15 credits)

- *Digital Performance will introduce students to the creative use of technology in performance. Students will engage with multidisciplinary performance and explore the distinction between live and recorded performance. This will involve the acquisition of skills in relation to a number of the traditional technical aspects of theatre (lighting, sound, stage management) as well as newer technologies (video making, use of live feeds, internet performance). A basic introduction will be given to using appropriate software. Students will work in groups on small creative projects within which they will develop a short performance using a mixture of live and recorded effects.*

Performance Skills 1B (15 credits)

- *Performance Skills 1B focusses on the exploration of the voice in performance. This may include singing and/or vocal techniques, with attention to developing your vocal ability and confidence. You are expected to undertake vocal experimentation and vocal development, individually and in ensemble work. This may include working with musical accompaniment and a cappella, as well as learning some basic music theory.*

Staging and Production (15 credits)

- This module will involve the staging of a directed performance. You form a company, taking on a performance and/or significant backstage role to work alongside your director in the realisation of a contemporary performance text. You engage in a full rehearsal process, in which the chosen text will be analysed and explored within the context of your wider studies of twentieth century to contemporary performance and associated theories. Your rehearsal process involves active participation in the interpreting and staging of your text, which requires you to engage with post dramatic practices, such as the adaptation and deconstruction of course materials.

Performance Contexts 1B (15 credits)

- *This module provides you with an introductory understanding of the historical and cultural development of performance through both practical and critical exploration, from, approximately, the mid-twentieth century to the contemporary moment. To do this, we continue to consider significant moments, key movements and important practitioners across the field of performing arts. In addition, you examine performance works within their particular historical, social, cultural and political contexts. In engaging with selected works, you are introduced to a range of theoretical approaches to the study of the performing arts, examining changes in form and conventions in performance.*

Directing Skills (15 credits)

- *This module encourages you to develop key skills involved in leading and directing theatrical projects and performance. You will engage with different directorial and creative leadership approaches through workshops, seminar discussion and practical experiments. Skills in directing and leading will be developed with reference to different forms of text. These will be used as the basis to explore a range of directorial approaches and to demonstrate the ways in which appropriate strategies may be tailored to the demands of different rehearsal methodologies. In addition, you will practically explore the planning and leading of workshops, rehearsals and consider the management of production processes.*

Year two for full-time students (Level 5)

Performance Skills 2A (15 credits)

- *Performance Skills 2A focusses on movement for performance. Movement could encompass formal technique as well as pedestrian vocabularies, which are explored through a variety of practical approaches. You are expected to demonstrate enhanced performance skills through experimentation and increasingly challenging work, delivered with confidence. Assessment is through the development of a short solo study that is used as a departure point for a later small-group movement piece. You also submit a portfolio where you reflect critically on your practical experience of movement training in classes. It includes analysis and critical engagement with contextualising materials and research.*

Making Performance (30 credits)

- *This module offers students the opportunity to perform in, design and direct a large-scale public performance, created from a selected source text. Students must agree effective methods of decision-making, show full commitment to rehearsals and production meetings and demonstrate a willingness to participate in all aspects of work on the production. Performing Arts students at Cambridge may also be assessed as musicians or singers within the rehearsal process and performance, and students at University Centre Peterborough may be assessed on their physical theatre work.*

The Body in Performance (15 credits)

- *This module will focus on the body in contemporary performance and theatre practice and the ways in which it can challenge dominant political, cultural and artistic ideologies. Students will consider how the body in performance is framed and/or revealed as being subject to ideological and social forces that restrain it and will interrogate the potential of performance to offer resistance to these forces. The course will examine the place of the body in contemporary culture through critiques of structures of power and knowledge, whilst simultaneously posing questions about the political efficacy of performance and the ethical implications of the work. Work encountered might include live art practice, dance theatre, digital performance, activism and bio-art.*

Performance Skills 2B (15 credits)

- *Performance Skills 2B is the final module in the series and focuses on interdisciplinary work across drama, music/voice and movement. You are expected to draw on and develop a wide range of principles and methodologies, accumulated over the previous modules, to create imaginative and original work. Your collaborative and performance skills will be further developed through the presentation of new practices, contexts and ideas that you adapt and respond to with flexibility and creativity.*

Performance Writing (15 credits)

- *In this module you will be introduced to different approaches and creative processes of writing for performance and it will enable you to engage with a range of methods in the development of writing material. This will involve you in practical explorations of various approaches to and methodologies of writing through workshops and exercises. You will also be introduced to the work of various performance and theatre practitioners/companies who adopt different writing techniques in their creative process in order to examine strategies and potentials for performance. During the sessions, you will explore such things as combining autobiography and fiction, using stimuli as a starting point, writing through walking, embodied writing and the use of personas in writing processes.*

Performing Shakespeare (15 credits)

- *This module introduces students to the field of contemporary performance theory and practice in relation to Shakespeare. This will include study of a range of twentieth and twenty-first century critical and directorial interpretations of plays by Shakespeare in the theatre and on film. Part of the focus of the module will encompass issues that continue to be contested today, such as power, sexuality, gender, justice, morality, religion and war. This will be supplemented by the study of directorial strategies and creative responses to Shakespeare's plays that follow a variety of practical approaches to acting and performance. Exploration will focus on the ways in which critics, directors and actors generate meanings from Shakespeare's plays, drawing on the details of primary texts, secondary criticism and examples of contemporary creative responses to the plays.*

New Media Performance (15 credits)

- *This module will introduce students to recent innovations in contemporary theatre and performance through a practical and theoretical consideration of new technologies and forms of information exchange available to theatre-makers at the start of the twenty-first century. Students will examine the technological interventions that give rise to mediated performance and new methods of its dissemination. These ideas will be explored in practice through the use of technologies of sound, music and video to produce a piece of mediated performance. Students will be expected to engage with the interfaces between live performance, digital technologies, social networking sites, mass participatory sites of video performance, online arts marketing and experimental film-making.*

Final year for full-time students (Level 6)

Undergraduate Major Project (30 credits)

- *The Undergraduate Major Project represents the culmination of study in the Music and Performing Arts courses and allows students to engage in a substantial piece of individual research and/or creative work, focused on a topic relevant to their specific course. The project topic will be assessed for suitability to ensure sufficient academic challenge and satisfactory supervision by an academic member of staff. The chosen topic will require the student to identify/formulate problems and issues, conduct literature reviews, evaluate information, investigate and adopt suitable development methodologies, determine solutions, develop hardware, software and/or media artefacts as appropriate, develop a performance, process data, critically appraise and present their findings using a variety of media.*

Devising Performance (30 credits)

- *Students on this course will be engaged in the processes and practice of devising work for the theatre. The first part of the course will involve a practical exploration of various approaches to and methodologies of devising through workshops and exercises. Students will also be introduced to the work of various performance and theatre practitioners/companies who utilise devising in their creative process, in order to examine strategies and potentials for performance. Students will then engage in a production process, led by a member of staff. They will develop, rehearse, design, market and realise a piece of devised performance. This work will be created as a whole group to be presented to an external audience. The processes of devising, with specific reference to their artistic, historical and theoretical contexts, will be critically investigated in an essay submitted prior to the final performance. The devised performance work will be created within the ensemble.*

Special Subject (15 credits)

- *This module offers you the opportunity to interrogate a specialist area of contemporary research, and in particular with ongoing research being produced in the department by staff members. Some topics allow you to explore in greater depth matters covered in other modules; others will introduce material not otherwise covered in the existing provision. The choice will vary from year to year. An indicative list of topics might include a selection of the following: - Stage Adaptation - Performance & Science - Operatic and Musical Theatre Production - Multimedia Performance - Samuel Beckett's Plays - Applied Theatre Practices - Reviewing New Drama.*

Contemporary Texts (15 credits)

- *This module will focus on contemporary drama, theatre and/or performance produced in the 21st century. You will explore, in practice, potential new stagings of the pieces selected, while considering their original reception and production. In the absence of substantial critical evaluation of such recent performances, you will be expected to develop and defend your own independent and evidence-based judgements concerning this work. You will also be asked to conduct internet searches to access available review notices in newspapers or periodicals and to research any relevant recent scholarly articles or chapters. You will encounter a range of performance pieces, such as authored play-texts, and techniques used by contemporary devising, dance theatre, music theatre and physical theatre companies, as appropriate.*

Professional Practice (15 credits)

- *This module will encourage you to examine and explore the processes involved in teaching and leading participatory workshops in the performing arts. You will gain practical experience and skills in leading and facilitating workshops as practicing professionals, which can be delivered in educational, professional and/or community contexts. The module equips you with theoretical and methodological knowledge relevant to a workshop leader and will enable you to practice and develop confidence in delivering effective and well-prepared sessions. You will be expected to reflect on the responsibilities and practices of leadership in creative contexts and develop enhanced skills for future employability. You will develop skills in independent learning, research and communication of process and product throughout the module.*

Enterprise in the Creative Arts (15 credits)

- *This independent study-style module is designed to provide an element of work experience in the course, in preparation for the probable career focus to be followed by the student on graduation. An important emphasis of the module is the development of transferable personal skills and the ability to evaluate the level of attainment achieved in particular contexts. Students are asked to identify an individual area of work placement that does not overlap significantly with those chosen by other students. They are encouraged to be critical in their approach so that clear parameters for evaluation are established. The module also incorporates elements relating to the development of entrepreneurship skills in the acknowledgment that employment activities in the creative arts are often self-generated, and that self-employment may feature significantly in students' future work plans.*