



**BIRMINGHAM CITY**  
University

*Faculty of the Arts, Design and  
Media*

ROYAL  
**BIRMINGHAM**  
CONSERVATOIRE



*Advanced Postgraduate Diploma:  
Professional Performance*

Professional Performance Portfolio Syllabuses  
*from September 2019 onwards*

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## Instrumental Performance Specialism

The student should choose two of the following assessment options, both of which must be passed with a qualifying mark of 50%:

- 1 A fifty-minute recital of works from the solo repertoire.
- 2 A fifty-minute recital of chamber works with a demanding instrumental part.
- 3 A fifty-minute recital in which the chosen instrument features in an accompanimental role (suitable for pianists, organists, guitarists & harpists, etc.).
- 4 A concerto performed with orchestra (subject to availability).
- 5 A mock orchestral audition comprising:
  - a) two contrasting pieces from the solo repertoire, one of which (if appropriate) should be a first movement from a concerto to include a cadenza (15 minutes maximum);
  - b) specified, prepared orchestral excerpts;
  - c) sight-reading and transposition tests as appropriate;
  - d) a prepared extract (This will be issued to the candidate approximately 20 minutes before the assessment begins).

This will typically be an audition for a principal position, unless there is a compelling argument otherwise. Excerpts, sight-reading and transposition will be set by the Head of Department, with instrument-specific specialist advice where appropriate.

- 6 An option specially approved by the Course Director and the appropriate Head of Department.

### Notes

- a) Option 1 may be chosen for both assessments.
- b) Options 2 to 5 may each be chosen once only. It should be noted that Option 4 has limited availability, and is subject to the Conservatoire's overall planning needs.
- c) By agreement with the Head of Department and Course Director, students may perform on customary second instruments, e.g. flautists may perform on piccolo or alto flute, oboists on cor anglais, violinists on baroque violin, pianists on fortepiano.
- d) It is recommended that students' overall assessment repertoire should be wide-ranging, with special consideration given to including music from the twentieth- and twenty-first-centuries, as well as from earlier periods. However, students with strengths in particular areas may be permitted a degree of specialisation.
- e) All assessment repertoire must be approved in advance by the student's teacher(s), Head of Department and the Course Director.

## Vocal Performance Specialism

The student should choose two of the following assessment options, both of which must be passed with a qualifying mark of 50%:

- 1 A fifty-minute song recital.
- 2 A major extended solo work performed with orchestra (subject to availability).
- 3 A major solo part in a choral work performed with orchestra or instrumental ensemble (subject to availability).
- 4 A complete major role in a fully-staged operatic production (subject to audition).
- 5 An option specially approved by the Course Director and the Head of Department.

### Notes

- a) Option 1 may be chosen for both assessments.
- b) Options 2, 3 and 4 may each be chosen once only.
- c) It should be noted that Options 2 and 3 have limited availability, and are subject to the Conservatoire's overall planning needs.
- d) The repertoire of Option 1 should present overall a balanced and varied repertoire covering at least two national song traditions other than English. Programmes would normally be expected to be drawn from repertoire from the late eighteenth century to the present, and should include a song-cycle or a work comprising several songs usually performed as a single entity. However, that does not preclude the inclusion of earlier repertoire, performed with appropriate accompaniment.
- e) It is recommended that students' overall assessment repertoire should be wide-ranging, with special consideration given to including music from the twentieth- and twenty-first-centuries, as well as from earlier periods. However, students with strengths in particular areas may be permitted a degree of specialisation.
- f) All assessment repertoire must be approved in advance by the student's teacher(s), Head of Department and the Course Director.

## Collaborative Piano Specialism

The student should choose two of the following assessment options, both of which must be passed with a qualifying mark of 50%:

- 1 A fifty-minute song recital. The programme must include a song-cycle (or a group of songs normally performed as an entity), and must represent at least two of the following national traditions:
  - German *Lied*
  - French *mélodie*
  - English and American Song
- 2 A fifty-minute recital with an instrumentalist. The programme must include at least one major duo-sonata.
- 3 A fifty-minute recital of works involving at least two different collaborative partnerships.
- 4 A performance of a substantial work or pair of works involving a larger ensemble: e.g. piano trio, piano quartet, piano quintet
- 5 An option specially approved by the Course Director and the appropriate Head of Department.

### Notes

- a) The choice of options across both assessments is open to discussion (i.e. the question of specialisation versus breadth). Decisions will be made after discussion with, and with the agreement of, the Head of Department and Course Director. Where two programmes of vocal repertoire are offered, however, all three national traditions must be represented overall.
- b) It is recommended that students' overall assessment repertoire should be wide-ranging, with special consideration given to including music from the twentieth- and twenty-first-centuries, as well as from earlier periods. However, students with strengths in particular areas may be permitted a degree of specialisation.
- c) Each assessment programme may include one or two short solo piano items.
- d) All assessment repertoire must be approved in advance by the student's teacher, Head of Department and the Course Director.
- e) As well as working with their own tutors, students taking this specialism are expected to take advantage of the many opportunities to play in the lessons of their vocal and instrumental partners, and for song classes and instrumental masterclasses; they are also expected to attend relevant language classes. This forms part of their training to acquire an understanding of the needs of singers and instrumentalists as well as a knowledge and comprehension of the texts of the songs they accompany: such understanding, as shown in their playing, will form part of the assessment of their performances.

## Organ Performance Specialism

The student should choose two of the following assessment options, both of which must be passed with a qualifying mark of 50%:

- 1 A fifty-minute recital of works from the solo repertoire.
- 2 A fifty-minute recital in which the organ is featured in an accompanimental role
- 3 A concerto performed with orchestra (subject to availability).
- 4 An option specially approved by the Course Director and the appropriate Head of Department.

### Notes

- a) Option 1 may be chosen for both assessments.
- b) Options 2 to 4 may each be chosen once only. It should be noted that Option 3 has limited availability, and is subject to the Conservatoire's overall planning needs.
- c) It is recommended that students' overall assessment repertoire should be wide-ranging.
- d) All assessment repertoire must be approved in advance by the student's teacher(s), Head of Department and the Course Director.

## Chamber Music Specialism

The ensemble should choose two of the following assessment options, both of which must be passed with a qualifying mark of 50%:

- 1 A fifty-minute recital of chamber works of contrasting styles and periods.
- 2 A fifty-minute recital of chamber works focusing on a particular period, style, composer or theme.
- 3 A fifty-minute recital in which the ensemble features in a collaborative role (i.e, extending the ensemble to include additional performers, for example string quartet with piano) or performing newly commissioned works with an 'in house' composer.
- 4 An option specially approved by the Course Director and the appropriate Head of Department.

### Notes

- a) Options 1 and 2 may be chosen for both assessments.
- b) Option 3 may be chosen once only
- c) By agreement with the Head of Department and Course Director, students may perform on customary second instruments, e.g. flautists may perform on piccolo or alto flute, oboists on cor anglais, violinists on baroque violin, pianists on fortepiano.
- d) It is recommended that an ensemble's overall assessment repertoire should be wide-ranging, with special consideration given to including music from the twentieth- and twenty-first-centuries, as well as from earlier periods. However, ensembles with strengths in particular areas may be permitted a degree of specialisation.
- e) All assessment repertoire must be approved in advance by the student's/ensembles teacher(s)/coach(es), Head of Chamber Music and the Course Director.
- f) All players in the group will be awarded the same mark, unless the assessment panel expressly wishes to inflect the marks for individuals.

## Choral Conducting Specialism

The student will be required to take the following two assessments, both of which must be passed with a qualifying mark of 50%:

- 1 An hour long concert of choral music with a varied programme including different periods and styles *and* the final rehearsal on the day of the concert.
- 2 A forty-five-minute interview (*in camera*) to include a selection of the following as appropriate (exact requirements to be agreed in advance with the student's Choral Conducting Tutor and Course Director).
  - a) conduct an unknown score to a piano realisation (The student will have the opportunity to view the score during a preparation period of up to 60 minutes immediately prior to the examination).
  - b) Conduct a secco recitative from an opera, oratorio or sacred drama, performed by a singer, cellist and keyboard player. The student will mark the recitative up for performance during the preparation period described above and then be prepared to justify their decisions to the panel during the examination. There will be an additional preparation period of 20 minutes for rehearsal of the recitative with the performers.
  - c) sight-read a short vocal score in four parts (G and F clefs only).
  - d) sight-sing an unaccompanied piece (the students' preferred voice part should be indicated to the Course Director in advance of the examination).
  - e) demonstrate knowledge of pronunciation by reading extracts from texts in German, French, Latin and/or 'German' Latin
  - f) discuss orchestration in relation to choral repertoire and practical issues such as choir administration, recruitment and motivation

### Notes

- a) Both assessments are compulsory and may only be chosen once. The student is required to recruit and rehearse the choir him/herself. The concert venue will be fixed by the Conservatoire Performance Department and Concert Office in consultation with the student. Hire costs will be covered by the Conservatoire.
- b) Assessment 1 concert repertoire must be approved in advance by the student's teacher(s), Head of Department and the Course Director. While programmes should ideally be wide-ranging, students with strengths in particular areas may be permitted a degree of specialisation.
- c) The recitatives for Assessment 2 will be supplied at the start of the preparation period. The Conservatoire will organise the singer and accompanist.



## Opera Repetiteur Specialism

The student will be required to take the following two assessments, both of which must be passed with a qualifying mark of 50%:

- 1 An Opera Workshop production (public performance, e.g. Opera Scenes).
- 2 An individual coaching session followed by a viva voce (*in camera*).

### Notes

- a) Both assessments are compulsory and may only be chosen once.
- b) Assessment 1: the scenes to be included in the workshop production will be chosen by the Head of Vocal & Operatic Studies.
- c) Assessment 2: the coaching session will last for 30-40 minutes and the viva voce 15-20 minutes. The candidate should prepare two extracts in total from at least two different operas. One extract may be in English, and the remaining extracts should be in another language. The student will be responsible for selecting/inviting a singer to participate in the assessment and repertoire choices should be made in discussion with both the singer and the Head of Vocal & Operatic Studies.

