

**BA Honours Commercial Music**  
**David Adams**

Commercial Music has helped me to gain valuable skills, not just within the confines of the classroom but also through the various connections to the course across London. Commercial Music has given me the tools and vision to understand the career path I wish to take.



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**Other related areas/courses you might be interested in:**  
Music Informatics BSc Honours (p121)

## Commercial Music BA Honours

This degree is the first in the UK to offer the opportunity to learn, practise and experiment with the artistic and business strategies in today's music industry, and welcomes applicants with a business or music production interest. The course is advised by a team of leading music industry figures and draws on producers, musicians and business people for its teaching staff. Our graduates are working for major music industry companies and trade organisations. Many have started their own successful businesses, while others have embarked on recording careers, as artists, with major and independent record labels and as performers with high profile artists. As part of the last Teaching Quality Assessment exercise, the degree received an excellent score of 23 out of a possible 24 points.

### Course content

The degree allows you flexibility to build your programme in music production and music business, drawing on current and historical practice to provide a stimulating context in which to create and promote music. Music Production covers live and recorded production and involves study of composition, arranging, performance, music technology and studio production. You work on group and individual projects ranging from composition and arrangement in established styles to recording for release to a specific market. Music Business is tailored for careers in the music industry. You are introduced to key music business concepts and practices, with a focus on marketing, law and the live industry. Further specialisation brings a study of publishing, international markets, music entrepreneurship and a small-scale project. Music Sociology investigates the cultural and social roles and context of commercial music. Focusing on how music has developed as a force in pop culture and the mass media, you address sociological debates concerning music development over the last century.

### Year 1 (Credit Level 4)

**Music Production:** Subjects of study include: Commercial Scorewriting and Arranging 1 • Digital Music Technology • Performance and Style: International and Cross Cultural Music • Performance and Style: The Contemporary Mainstream • Recording and Technology: The Contemporary Mainstream • Recording Technology: Music and Media • The Songbook

**Music Business:** Subjects of study include: Business for Creative People • Law and the Music Market • Principles of Music Marketing • The Anatomy of the Music Industry • Tour Management and the Live Music Industry

**Music Sociology:** Subjects of study include: Music and its Audiences • Music Research Project

### Year 2 (Credit Level 5)

**Music Production:** Subjects of study include: Commercial Scorewriting and Arranging 2 • Ensemble Performance 1 and 2 • Innovation and New Music • Music and Sound Design for Media and Virtual Environments • Music for Film and Broadcast Media • Negotiated Music Project • The Single Package • The Songbook 2

**Music Business:** Subjects of study include: International Music Markets • Marketing Music Repertoire • Music Entrepreneurship • Music Publishing and Rights Management • Negotiated Music Project • Negotiations and Current Affairs in the Music Industry

**Music Sociology:** Subjects of study include: Music Video Theory • Pop Music and Culture

### Year 3 (Credit Level 6)

Subjects of study include: Commercial Music Major Project 1 and 2 • Industry Brief • Thesis • Work Experience

### Length of course

Three-year, full-time

### UCAS code

W304

### Location

Harrow

The course is under revalidation and review this year.

### Teaching and assessment

At the start of the course teaching is lecture and seminar based. Production elements are taught in our own suite of studios. You can get involved in music-related debates with established music professionals who come to us as guest lecturers. Teaching becomes lecture and project driven, and you will conceive and develop your own projects helped by regular tutorials. Year 3 (Credit Level 6) is entirely self-motivated and project based, and you are encouraged to work on projects that may set you in the direction of your future career. Assessment methods vary and include written assignments, performances and portfolio development.

### Associated careers

Four out of five graduates find employment, half of them entering music-related positions. Graduates not entering the music business have gone on to other careers in the media industry including film and TV.

### Typical offer for September 2009

Qualification type	Grade/points
A Levels	CC
International Baccalaureate	26 points (minimum)
BTEC National Diploma	MPP

We require evidence of a high level of ability in performance, composition, studio production or business, assessed by interview and audition.

See also entry requirements on p48.

## Commercial Music Performance BMus Honours

Building on the highly successful academic discipline of commercial music, this innovative course is for those entering the music industry as performers, composers and educators. It supports the development of instrumental and group performance skills with composition underpinned by a programme of contextual studies combining musicology, music business and music education. At Year 3 (Credit Level 6) you specialise in performance, composition or music education. Our strong music industry links provide guest lectures from leading practitioners while maximising opportunities for graduates to begin their careers in music.

### Course content

Subjects of study include Individual and Group Performance 1, 2, 3 and 4, semester-long performance modules fusing instrumental development, group performance, musicianship, songwriting and composition. A range of specific themes are explored over the first four semesters, including finding your voice, music and narrative, performance and technology, and music as innovation.

Instrumental workshops are grouped around generic instrument types: keyboard, guitar, voice, keyboard, and drums and percussion (support for other instrumentalists is provided, but varies from year to year and should be discussed with the course leader).

Group performance is at the heart of the course and makes use of a range of approaches. In finding your voice, groups work together to discover ways of performing that bring the best out of each individual. Music and narrative encourages you to devise music performance in relation to narrative structures including theatre, dance and multimedia. Performance and technology examines how technologies open up opportunities for the ways we perform and reach our audiences. Music as innovation examines the ways we can break barriers and extend the language of music.

A programme of contextual studies develops your understanding of the origins, cultural and theoretical backgrounds in music. Music and Identity examines the origins of commercial music in terms of (sub) culture, gender and politics. Music as Intellectual Property examines how IP management affects the lives and careers of musicians. Music and Meaning examines how and why music does what it does for its listeners, by considering cognition, politics of taste and music semiotics. The Business of Music Performance introduces you to a range of issues affecting musicians including career planning and accounting, while examining the roles of music business organisations. As an option in Year 2 (Credit Level 5) you may study Strategies for Music Education, which looks into the theory and practice of a range of music education structures.

For further information about Music courses visit the School of Media, Arts and Design website at [www.westminster.ac.uk/mad](http://www.westminster.ac.uk/mad)

### Length of course

Three-year, full-time

### UCAS code

W310

### Location

Harrow

### Teaching and assessment

Whenever possible, performance assessments take place in front of an audience and may be followed by discussion focusing on the performance quality. Musicianship assessments involve tests of aural ability, sonic awareness, improvisation and keyboard skills. Other assignments are submitted as an essay or a portfolio.

### Associated careers

You will be able to enter the music industry as a creative musician, performing and composing and making use of the skills, opportunities and professional networks developed through the course. Performers may join bands or work as session musicians while others may compose and create across a range of musical spheres. You may also choose to develop a career in music business or musicology. If you choose to specialise in music education at Year 3 (Credit Level 6) you can apply to continue to PGCE, or start work immediately within a growing range of music education opportunities.

### Typical offer for September 2009

Qualification type	Grade/points
A Levels	CC
International Baccalaureate	26 points (minimum)
BTEC National Diploma	MPP

Relevant subjects preferred and instrumental grade 7 or equivalent performance experience is valued. Applicants with backgrounds in music performance such as DJs, underground music styles or electronica which fall outside conventional music education are strongly encouraged to apply and will be assessed at interview/audition.

See also entry requirements on p48.

## Audio Technology (Foundation Degree in Arts FdA)

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**The vocational emphasis of the Foundation Degree in Audio Technology is intended to offer students a combination of technical skills, academic knowledge and transferable skills in sound engineering, as demanded by the music, live sound, recording, broadcast, creative media, post-production and related industries.**

Many of those who have completed the course have gone on to work in television, recording and live sound, for companies such as the BBC, the Apollo Victoria Theatre, Abbey Road Studios, The Royal Opera House, Foley (for Quantum of Solace) and many other prestigious employers.

### **About you**

You are passionate about sound engineering and audio technology equipment and techniques. You will be interested in music, speech or sound effects, and it's your ambition to become a sound engineer working in television, radio, recording, live sound or film sound. You probably do not want to become a musician or performer.

You are ready to prove to us in an interview that you have already committed yourself to sound engineering.

### **Length of course**

Two-year, part-time

### **Location**

City of Westminster College  
(see p45)

### **Teaching and assessment**

The course is approximately 50 per cent practical and 50 per cent theory, with a high proportion of course work and project material. Many of our teaching staff have worked in industry at the highest level. Our aim is to provide our students with the skills they need to work in the sound engineering industry. We have a 400-capacity venue equipped with industry-standard equipment (Electrovoice, Midas, BSS, Neve, and microphones by Neumann, Soundfield, AKG, Sennheiser, Shure etc).

### **Entry requirements**

Applicants will usually be expected to possess one A Level or two AS Levels in relevant subjects, or AVCE or BTEC ND in a relevant subject area. Applicants with non-standard qualifications or relevant experience are encouraged to apply, provided they have relevant demonstrable work experience.

# Creative Music Production and Business (Foundation Degree in Arts FdA)

**This innovative and creative course is aimed at music producers and musicians who want to develop professional production and musicianship skills, and then go on to learn the business skills needed to create a sustainable career within the music industry. The course has been designed in response to the ever-increasing demand for high quality practical and vocational training at a higher education level, by those wishing to develop their skills and experience in the music industry, both as creative music-makers and as business entrepreneurs. With excellent links to the music industry, it is a course designed to develop your creative and technological skills and ability, and then to focus on how you can channel these skills into your career and business development.**

## Course content

During the first year of the course you develop skills and ability in creative music production, musicianship and creative composition, and develop an understanding of the music industry and the social and cultural environment in which it operates.

During the second year you turn your attention more firmly towards the music industry, focusing on business planning and development, finance skills and the music industry as a whole, while continuing to develop your music production skills. You will be introduced to the professional contexts of the music industry and particularly the imperatives of the small-scale business entrepreneur. You are required to create and pilot your own small business idea and create a viable business plan.

## Teaching and assessment

You follow an intensely practical approach to learning and are required to complete a high level of creative music output throughout the course. You follow a varied programme of practical and theoretical tasks and are encouraged to try out what you have learnt in a practical, hands-on way, reflecting on more theoretical learning. You are assessed in a variety of ways, including recordings, work-related projects, logbooks, written work, self-evaluations and verbal presentations.

## Associated careers

The course is primarily designed to provide you with a bank of skills and knowledge necessary to create your own role within the music industry, such as setting up your own business. However, you will also have the skills you need if you want to work within the existing music industry. You will be able to enter a wide field of career areas, including commercial music production and music for media. Alternatively, you will be able to access BA Honours Commercial Music Year 3 (Credit Level 6) should you wish to continue your studies.

This course is a collaboration between CM Ltd (formerly known as Creative Music) – a vibrant and innovative music education and training company based in central London – and the University of Westminster. CM has a long-standing tradition of training and artist development using up-to-date, industry-standard equipment and facilities. The University has a thriving music department and commercial music degree with state-of-the-art recording studios and extensive library and IT facilities.

## Length of course

Three-year, full-time

## UCAS code

WN32; Campus Code S

## Location

Harrow and CM Ltd

## Entry requirements

This course is designed to welcome people from all current music backgrounds and does not require formal qualifications for entry. Previous practical experience of music/music production is essential. A study support programme is available for those who need it.

## Popular Musician (Foundation Degree in Arts FdA)

This degree is for musicians whose primary focus is related to the promotion of their own music. Today's music industry needs musicians who have entrepreneurial skills. These musicians need to understand their own music, and how to exploit it in order to reach its potential market. Musical skill is crucial, as is the ability to contextualise oneself within the current musical and economic climate. Musicians must demonstrate an understanding of the sector and have a clear idea of how they intend to thrive within it.

### Course content

Subjects of study include: Composition • Contextual Studies • Music Business • Performance Studies • Self-Management • Study Skills

### Teaching and assessment

Delivery is undertaken by popular music specialists, Access to Music, at their British Academy of New Music in east London. It focuses on the development and exploitation of repertoire through the workplace. You are expected to understand the workplace and its associated areas, and will need to demonstrate how it relates to you and your music. Typically the work place may be located in independent record labels, or the club-level concert circuit. Access to Music's current liaison with grass roots service providers is extensive. These links are incorporated into the course to promote work-based learning at all levels. You are assessed in a variety of ways, including recordings, performances, work-related projects, logbooks, written work, self-evaluations and verbal presentations.

### Associated careers

You can enter the industry and continue your professional development through further study. The University's BA Honours Commercial Music provides a coherent progression route, and the FdA includes a bridging module to prepare you for this progression. This course is designed to balance the development of intellectual and practical skills with work-related learning. It uses innovative work-related learning opportunities, enabling you to take on a wide range of industry roles, informing your career path.

### Length of course

Two-year, full-time

### UCAS code

W311; Campus Code B

### Location

British Academy of New Music,  
Bow, London

### Typical offer for September 2009

Qualification type	Grade/points
A Levels	CC
International Baccalaureate	26 points (minimum)
BTEC National Diploma	MPP

Level 3 Music Practitioner qualifications are welcomed.

Applicants who are in full-time or part-time employment in a relevant area, or have non-standard qualifications are encouraged to apply. The admissions panel reserve the right to admit applicants who do not have the previously stated qualifications, but who demonstrate outstanding ability through their portfolio and interview.

Students who do not have English as a first language are assessed to meet the IELTS 6.5 standard. A student may be advised to undertake additional languages courses or receive language support toward achieving the required standard by the start of the course, during the first term or by the end of the first year, as the situation demands.

See also entry requirements on p48.