

TRINITY LABAN

Programme Specification

Programme	MA Songwriting
Awarding Institution	Trinity Laban Conservatoire
Location of study	Online with a one-week in-person Songwriting Intensive Camp at King Charles Court
Mode and duration	Two years part-time
UK Credits	180
ECTS	90

Summary Description

The MA Songwriting is a two-year part-time online intensive postgraduate programme of study for creative artists and musicians who want to develop their musical skills and authentic artistic voice leading to a sustainable career as a songwriter and performer. The programme values originality and the edgy type of Songwriting that is the hallmark of the UK music creative scene.

The programme is aimed at:

Emerging and Professional artists. These artists are typically songwriters and performers who are serious about music and are seeking to hone their writing talents and optimise their industry business skills.

Recent Graduates who have completed an undergraduate degree and want to develop their Songwriting and launch their career in music while continuing to be supported by a Popular Music team in a Conservatoire. Graduates from a range of studies in the arts and sciences are encouraged to participate.

Students from across the globe. This international online programme has a strong appeal to emerging and professional artists and recent graduates across the world across the world who wish to further develop their English songwriting skills and become a part of an international songwriting community.

The programme is delivered online, allowing for independent study as a part of a vibrant community of learners, and includes a one-week in-person Songwriting Intensive Camp at Trinity Laban in London, UK. It champions individual creativity and innovation, fostering an environment for you to develop your musical identity whatever your style.

The programme aims are:

- To provide advanced training in the art and craft of Songwriting, which encourages the demonstration of individual musical talent, creative flair, and scholarship.
- To understand and apply professional industry-ready work to clearly identified and defined audiences in live performance, music release, publishing and emerging means of monetising work.
- To provide an inclusive and diverse online learning environment, celebrating the significance of non-western traditions as well as established western music styles in a community where everyone can find a welcoming space to express their unique voices.
- To create a nurturing research-led learning environment that encourages risk and creativity and innovation, reflecting wherever applicable, cutting-edge thinking within the profession, and taking advantage, where appropriate, of advances in digital, artificial intelligence and other technologies.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this programme, a student will be expected to be able to demonstrate:

Knowledge and understanding

1. Profound knowledge of the craft of Songwriting, its musical and lyrical concepts, allowing for their application, challenge, and adaptation in diverse creative contexts.
2. Research-informed critical analysis and comprehension of the broad scope of Songwriting, including its relationship with various artistic, historical, philosophical, cultural, and social dimensions, particularly within music creation, recording, and performance realms.
3. An advanced understanding of relevant research methodologies, originality and innovation that lead to new ideas in music making as a part of individual and collaborative working.
4. An advanced understanding of popular music production techniques: listening, crafting, analysing, and exploring digital recording and editing to articulate an individual artistic visions effectively, enabling critical evaluation and advancement of innovative and boundary-pushing work.
5. A systematic understanding of the music industry and its landscape, including how music is published, distributed and monetized from global to personal perspectives.

Skills

1. The ability to technically produce and realise work through established and emerging recording and music production techniques.
2. The ability to identify and engage audiences to develop, publish and release musical repertoire through a clearly articulated identity.
3. The ability to critically analyse and synthesise knowledge of the essential components of relevant musical language and structures through a range of different approaches.
4. The ability to work creatively with others online and in-person. The ability to be a self-critical and motivated learner, able to produce independent work of high quality, to guide the learning of others, and to manage their own continuing professional development.
5. The ability to evaluate, refine and apply research methodologies in a range of Songwriting and related contexts.
6. The ability to analyse, present and communicate research discoveries in informed and concise methods.

Values and attitudes

1. A desire to create original work in a commitment to Songwriting.
2. A commitment to online collaborative processes and co-operative working, recognising the role of individual responsibility within the creative process, and an understanding of relevant professional expectations.
3. A curiosity and autonomy of learning, researching and presentation/communication with others.
5. A professional, reflective, and responsible attitude to their practice which embodies engagement in practical artistic research as a means of developing knowledge.

Curriculum

The core curriculum consists of modules in songwriting, music production, musicianship, research and industry studies. Research Lab and the Personal Specialism Project let you explore a research area and create a research project around a performance or a workplace setting.

Mastering Songwriting at postgraduate level involves advanced practice-based musical theory, including gaining an understanding of melody, harmony, rhythm, and song form and arrangement, exploring how these musical elements combine with lyrical

artistry, using poetic devices, metaphor, and storytelling. You will explore and research the combination of these elements, known as prosody, through using established analytical methods.

Throughout the three Songwriting modules, you investigate a diverse range of key repertoire as you develop a critical understanding of artistic intention and examine what makes a song emotionally engaging and compelling. This knowledge and understanding will give you the skills to apply create a body of original work.

Through Research Lab and carrying out your Personal Specialism Project, the researched ethos empowers you to embrace the broad scope of songwriting, including its relationship with various artistic, historical, philosophical, cultural and business contexts.

The Music Production for Songwriters module enhances your home studio skills, starting with basics to ensure all can participate. It helps you create professional recordings, build a portfolio, and refine songs into polished productions—key skills for the music industry. The synchronous and asynchronous schemes of work are designed to support creativity while focusing on the technical expertise needed for industry-standard work.

Through Industry Studies you will gain in-depth insights into key aspects of the music industry with a focus on how you can get your work released and published as you develop audiences for your work leading to income and a sustainable career as a songwriter.

Module Title	Credits	Core/ Elective	Mode of delivery	Compensation Y/N	Level
Musicianship for Songwriting	20	Core	Online	N	7
Songwriting	40	Core	Online	N	7
Songwriting Intensive	with above	Core	In Person	N	7
Songwriting: Repertoire and Context	20	Core	Online	N	7
Music Production for Songwriters	30	Core	Online	N	7
Industry Studies	30	Core	Online	N	7
ResLab	10	Core	Online	N	7
Personal Specialism Project	30	Core	Online	N	7

Pre and Co-requisites

1. Research Lab (ResLab) must be taken prior to the Personal Specialism Project.

All students are required to participate in the Songwriting Intensive Camp in London at their own cost (travel, accommodation and subsistence). In exceptional circumstances, with prior approval from the Programme Leader, online attendance is possible.

Part time study

You will study part time over two years. In the first year you will work primarily on creative songwriting and production, enabling you to create work to a professional standard. In the second year you will take Industry Studies that empower you to find an audience for your work and to reach audiences. Furthermore, you will take the ResLab and the Personal Specialism Project in which you follow your line of inquiry, which may be practice-based.

1st Year pattern of study (90 credits)

Module Title	Credits	Core/ Elective	Module credit	Mode of delivery	Compensa tion Y/N	Level
Musicianship for Songwriting	20	Core	100%	Online	N	7
Music Production for Songwriters	30	Core	100%	Online	N	7
Songwriting	40	Core	100%	Online	N	7
Songwriting Intensive Camp	with above	Core	P/F	In Person	N	7

2nd Year pattern of study (90 credits)

Module Title	Credits	Core/ Elective	Module credit	Mode of delivery	Compensa tion Y/N	Level
Songwriting: Repertoire and Context	20	Core	100%	Online	N	7
Personal Specialism Project	30	Core	100%	Online	N	7
Industry Studies	30	Core	100%	Online	N	7
ResLab	10	Core	100%	Online	N	7

Learning and teaching

Total learning hours	1800
Total self-directed study hours	1525
Total learning and teaching hours	275

The MA Songwriting programme employs a multi-layered approach to learning, blending formal instruction, personal study, and research, supplemented by robust online support through Moodle. Central to the learning experience are regular group sessions and one-to-one tutorials.

Each learning activity within the programme emphasizes the importance of independent study, encouraging students to engage actively with course materials, participate in online forum discussions, and undertake reflective practice tasks.

A key objective of the programme is to equip students with independent learning strategies for lifelong learning. Tutors provide guidance and support, fostering a culture of reflection and assisting students in formulating personal study plans and targets.

Collaborative learning is integral to the programme, offering students opportunities to work alongside peers, assume leadership roles in projects, and benefit from valuable shared experiences. The curriculum encompasses a diverse range of learning and teaching methods, primarily delivered online through lectures and practical classes.

The MA Songwriting is an online programme and students need to be aware that there is the need to attend remotely. Songwriting study requires an environment to study, with a reasonable internet connection and at least, basic recording equipment. Trinity Laban will provide advice on best practice in ergonomic alignment and healthy working when sitting at a computer for long periods.

There is a minimum required basic equipment for study and to complete assessments:

- Regular and sustained access to a laptop or computer with digital audio workstation software. The computer can be bought within the last 3-5 years.
- An audio interface
- A microphone
- Headphones and/or speakers
- Relevant instrument

Retailers offer educational discounts and the institution may be able to assist students to purchase equipment in some cases where need is articulated, approved and funds

available. Advice on equipment and the optimum set-up for you can be given as a part of the admissions process.

Synchronous Learning

Sessions focus on developing practical and cognitive skills, with active student participation. A flipped learning approach is adopted, whereby students engage with course concepts before class, completing short formative tasks and readings. The synchronous sessions are recorded, enabling students to revisit content and allowing for flexible learning, thus empowering students to take ownership of their educational journey.

Asynchronous Learning

Core concepts are delivered asynchronously, enabling students to progress at their own pace. Accompanied by sequential tasks and tutor support, these materials prepare learners for their final assessments, providing them with a structured learning pathway.

Time Zones

The programme is designed to accommodate global time zones. Asynchronous learning can be taken at a time that suits the students' convenience, and synchronous sessions will be recorded for students who are unable to attend, with asynchronous tutor support provided where required.

One-to-One Teaching

Students receive 12 hours of individual tuition, tailored to their chosen area of specialization (e.g., Songwriting, Production, Business, Voice, Guitar, Keyboards). Tutors are assigned based on an initial tutorial session held during induction at the start of the programme. In addition, four hours of tutorials are delivered through the curriculum.

Forums and the Live Lounge

The programme offers regular opportunities for performance and feedback through the Live Lounge, a virtual space dedicated to student showcases. Additionally, the Songwriting Forum provides an online platform for students to share tracks and ideas, fostering a supportive learning community.

Industry Engagement

The MA Songwriting programme maintains strong connections with the music industry, featuring masterclasses and guest lectures from industry professionals. Engagement with organisations such as Warner Chappell and Universal A&R departments may offer students opportunities to receive feedback on their work and gain industry insights. While formal industry placements are not part of the programme, students can pursue work-based research as a part of their Personal Specialism Project.

Assessment

Each module has a single summative assignment that provides a grade and feedback that form the culmination of a scaffolded learning experience. These summative submissions are supported through a range of formative tasks. Feedback is provided at each stage of learning. A culture of sharing and critical analysis is encouraged through a structured process of peer evaluation in group sessions and forum tasks.

Independent study periods at the end of each teaching block provide time to focus on self-learning and completing assignments.

Assessment is focused on high-level critical thinking skills, research and a proto-professional standard of work. The prime focus of the programme is the creation and realisation of work.

What do I have to do to pass?

To pass the programme, you must achieve the credit for each module. You must pass each module with an overall mark of 50%. There is no compensation between modules.

Awards

Award	HE Level	Credits
Master of Arts	7	180
Postgraduate Diploma	7	120
Postgraduate Certificate	7	60

Classification	% required
With Distinction	70
With Merit	60
With Pass	50

Admissions criteria

Admission to the programme is assessed through application, submitting a recorded portfolio of three works, a video statement and an interview. The programme actively encourages songwriters in any genre with a variety of instrumental, vocal and production specialisms.

Academic Entry requirements

- A degree, or equivalent training and/or professional experience is normally required. For entry, applicants are normally expected to hold a good pass in a BA, BMus (Hons) or equivalent qualification.

OR

- Considerable professional experience in songwriting and/or performance settings, which should normally be current or in the last three years.

AND

- Demonstration of fluent musical and lyric creation skills in the recorded portfolio

AND

- (for overseas applicants) IELTS 6.5 overall with a minimum of 5.5 in all 4 areas

Application Process

Applications are made online through UCAS Conservatoires, with audition material uploaded to Embark. Students should select Music as their area of study on UCAS Conservatoires. Individual tuition provision will be discussed as a part of the interview process.

Personal statements should address:

- The applicant's background and relevant experience.
- The reasons for applying to Trinity Laban.

- The relevance of the programme to the applicant's current practice and their future
- Professional aspirations.
- Why the applicant is interested in the programme at this point in their career.
- Career/education/personal and professional development.

A successful applicant to the programme will need to demonstrate the following:

- The capacity for independent, critical, and reflective judgement.
- Intellectual curiosity and the potential for Songwriting development and related skills
- An articulation of career and personal development aims.
- The ability to organise and articulate opinions and arguments in writing using relevant specialist vocabulary.
- High levels of technical fluency and convincing interpretative skills in Songwriting and in a personal specialism (voice, instrumental, production).

The admissions process aims to be inclusive ensuring that applicants are supported and enabled to show their work and represent themselves in their best light at every step of the audition process. It is important to recognise experience and acquired ability as well as the potential to learn and to develop a distinct artistic voice.