

MA Opera 360: The Opera Industry

Apply Through: UCAS Conservatoires
Institution Code: R59
Application Code: 351F (full time), 351P (part time)

This course overview provides a summary of the programmes offered from September 2022. Please note this may be subject to amendment and change in future years. Students are always consulted on such change and details are made available to applicants holding offers. In order to progress through the course students normally have to pass all modules and achieve 180 credits to gain the masters qualification.

Industry Practice	Music & Drama	
Leadership in Opera 20 credits	Contemporary Music in Theatre 20 credits	To gain the masters qualification:
The House System 20 credits	The Director 20 credits	Major Project 40 credits
Opera Administration 20 credits	The Actor 20 credits	Research Skills 20 credits (or APL)
Writing & Opera 20 credits	The Designer 20 credits	Score Reading* 20 credits

*Optional module included for those students who would like to improve this skill

If there are insufficient numbers of students interested in a module, this may not be offered. If a module will not be run, we will advise students as soon as possible and help you choose an alternative module.

Leadership in Opera

Credits: 20
Assessment: Written (100%)

This module will focus on the ways in which outstanding leaders of opera companies are exploring innovative practices in the present environment. Lectures on a variety of issues ranging from engagement with the wider community to creating a working culture will build upon key concepts. Presentations will be delivered by leaders who have occupied high-level positions in opera companies. The focus of the classes will be to show the unique challenges facing leaders in the opera industry, including not only the day-to-day running of such organisations, but on protecting the

value of cultural institutions, of meeting the needs of the wider world, and of building strong paths toward the future. The module will help students to develop an advanced critical perspective on contemporary debates in the world of opera.

The House System

Credits: 20

Assessment: Written (100%)

This module will provide students with an understanding of the many ways that different houses have shaped the history of opera. Case studies will include houses such as the Vienna State Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and Welsh National Opera, as well as an in-depth look into the German house system. Through seminars with those who have worked in a number of different houses throughout their careers, students will be given a view of the unique practices of the business opera. Through advanced study of these diverse practices in the present moment and across history, students will be able to synthesise this knowledge along the way to innovating new approaches.

Opera Administration

Credits: 20

Assessment: Written (100%)

The various roles in opera administration will be investigated in-depth, from planning, booking, marketing, project managers, tours and concert managers, to theatrical services. The module will focus on case studies and presentations from working professionals so that students will be able to see how the various layers of management work together in the opera world to bring productions to the stage. The module will focus on those aspects of management that are unique to the opera industry so that students are better placed to move immediately into that professional environment.

Writing and Opera

Credits: 20

Assessment: Written (100%)

This module will analyse the multifarious means and methods that are used in writing about opera, and on how these have shaped, and are shaping, the industry. Journalism, criticism, and other written modes of engaging with opera will be considered, as will librettos, and specifically the changing practices in the 19th century in which focus on the text of the opera libretto became paramount. Classes will be taught by professionals with long experience writing across genres. Also, there will be writing workshops for students to develop their work with expert guidance.

Contemporary Music in Theatre

Credits: 20

Assessment: Presentation (60%), Written (40%)

This module will provide the student with an acute critical understanding of working practices in the multifaceted world of Contemporary Music in Theatre. The module will show the ways in which barriers between various theatrical genres are breaking down. Case studies of companies who stage different genres of theatrical productions will be explored in order to demonstrate how changing expectations have engendered opportunities for innovation, both in the manner of delivering productions and also in their content. The student will develop a knowledge of style and genre, but, crucially, from the perspective of performers.

The Director

Credits: 20
Assessment: Written (100%)

This module will examine the challenges of directing opera, from the formation of creative teams, to working in particular houses. Students will have the opportunity to observe rehearsals and training. There will be a focus on the professional environment inhabited by directors including the ways in which their role bridges the management structure and the creative structure. Students will be given a view of all aspects of a director's work. Lectures will provide students with an advanced historical understanding of the role. The work of particular directors will form the basis of case studies, looking at the expectations placed upon directors working in various genres, and the ways in which certain directors bring their personal style to any genre. Approaches concerning authorship in collaborative artistic endeavours will form the basis for a rigorous application of critical theory.

The Actor

Credits: 20
Assessment: Practical (100%)

This module will provide an in-depth exploration of acting in Opera, from the casting process to how actors approach a role, including how they build characters. Students will have the opportunity to observe rehearsals and training, and there will be a focus throughout the module on the rehearsal process. The classes will be led by singers and directors who will share their different approaches to building roles, and also share their insights into how the demands of singing must be adapted to the delineation of character.

The Designer

Credits: 20
Assessment: Practical (100%)

This module will focus on the work of designers, from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The module will be led by designers who will show how their work fits into the production process, and how those processes are different at various houses. A historical perspective will also be elucidated so that students may see how the role has developed over time. Case studies focussing on the work of particular designers across genres and for different houses will form the basis for critical enquiry. In addition, students will examine case studies on the different approaches of designers to certain iconic operas, and how the introduction of new technology is changing the ways in which opera may be presented in the future.

Major Project

Credits: 40

Assessment Options:

Written - Dissertation (100%)

Practical – Recording or Multimedia (100%)

Written – Marketing/Entrepreneurial (Proposal 60%/Pitch 40%)

Feasibility Study (Proposal 60%/Presentation 40%)

This module will guide and support the planning, preparation, production and presentation of research related to the topics explored on the course. Initial workshops in advanced research methodology will be followed by individual tutorials and group seminars. Following submission of a 300-word abstract, topics must be discussed with and approved by the MA Opera 360 Award Leader; individual tutors will then be assigned, and a schedule of supervisions established. Students will be required to present reports on their progress within designated postgraduate research seminars.

Students may undertake the project in a variety of forms – a **Research dissertation**, or similar written project, which may be a **Journalism portfolio** of writing in a variety of genres, from criticism to interviews and magazine pieces on contemporary topics (12,000 words); a **Marketing** project consisting of a researched campaign comprising the various materials that make up professional examples, and a pitch to a specialist panel; an **Entrepreneurial** project, which will allow students to pursue a range of activities, from the creation of a festival, to the creation of a new company, and consisting of a written proposal and a pitch to a specialist panel; a **Media** project comprising a professional-quality radio programme (or similar) on a topic in the world of opera. A **Feasibility Study** that responds to a current need in the opera industry, and in which students who are already working in the opera industry may choose a project focussed on the needs of their own organisation.

Research Skills

Credits: 20

Assessment: Written (50%), Written (50%)

This module will provide students with the skills necessary for postgraduate research. These include using library and online resources; referencing and bibliography; planning; critical reading and writing; and reflective work. Classes will also include writing workshops to help students better understand the specific requirements of academic style. Some tasks may be tethered to the development of larger project ideas that the student may wish to pursue further along in the course.

Score Reading and Analysis

Credits: 20

Assessment: Practical Coursework (100%)

This module will provide students with the skills necessary to analyse and interpret the operatic scores presented on the course. Classes will focus on musical notation, along with musical grammar. Conventions specific to opera will also be introduced.