CORK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA CHORCAÍ

PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW OF THE CIT CORK SCHOOL OF MUSIC 2015/16

Phase 2: Programme Review

# PROGRAMME PANEL REPORT

SCHOOL(S):          CIT Cork School of Music
DEPARTMENT:      Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies
DATE:                   14 – 15 March 2016

PROGRAMMES SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

**Major Awards**

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Popular Music, NFQ Level 8, 240 ECTS credits
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theatre and Drama Studies, NFQ Level 8, 240 ECTS credits

PROGRAMME REVIEW PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Mr Anthony Drennan, Professional Guitarist / Bassist
Mr Daithí Fallon, Representative of the Faculty of Engineering & Science, CIT Extended Campus
      (for CIT Registrar's Office)
Mr Pat Kiernan, Artistic Director, Corcadorca Theatre Company
Mr Frank McNamara, Composer, Pianist, Conductor, Record Producer (Chair)
Ms Belinda Wild, Course Coordinator, Advanced Acting Course, Kinsale College of FE/Joint
      Artistic Director, Wild Productions

PROGRAMME REPRESENTATION

**Programme Staff**

Dr Geoff Spratt, Director, CIT CSM
Mr John O'Connor, Head of Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies, CIT CSM
Ms Aiveen Kearney, Head of School
Ms Caoimhe Conlon, Lecturer, Department of Musicianship & Academic Studies & Department of
      Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies
Ms Ann Barry, Lecturer, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies
Mr Keith Clancy, Lecturer, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies

Mr David Hayes , Lecturer, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies
Mr Johnny McCarthy, Lecturer, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies
Ms Laoise O'Hanlon, Lecturer, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies
Mr Pat O'Keeffe, Lecturer, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies
Mr Roddy O'Keeffe, Lecturer, Department of Musicianship & Academic Studies
Ms Amy Prendergast, Lecturer, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies
Mr Karl Rooney, Lecturer, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies
Ms Trina Scott, Lecturer , Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies


**Learner Representatives**

Ms Niamh Connell, Year 3, BAPM, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies, Voice
Mr Alan Dalton, Year 4, BATDS, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies, Drama
Ms Shannon Hurley, Year 3, BATDS, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies,
	Drama
Ms Ophelia McCabe, Year 4, BAPM, Department of Wind, Percussion, Voice & Drama Studies,
	Popular Music (voice)


**Graduates**

These Programmes will produce their first graduates in 2016.

## A. PROGRAMME SUMMARY AND MAJOR CHANGES PROPOSED

### 1. BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONOURS) IN POPULAR MUSIC

#### 1.1. Programme Summary

The BA (Hons) in Popular Music is a four-year ab-initio degree at NFQ Level 8 attracting 240 ECTS credits. The degree was first validated in 2012 and is delivered in full-time and ACCS modes. Students are formed into Music Ensembles and the programme balances the development of both individual musical skills and ensemble work. The programme also includes complementary and support studies (such as Music and Technology). Each ensemble is made up of students specialising in an instrument (such as electric guitar, bass or drums) brought together as a 'band' or ensemble for the purposes of the programme. While this was originally cost driven it is working well from both the students' and lecturing staff point of view.

A long list of elective modules (some shared across related programmes) allows the student to 'customise' their degree with modules of their choosing from Sem. 4 onwards. A comprehensive list of electives is provided and students are guided in their choices by their early experience on the programme and through the guidance of academic staff. A typical profile of a graduate should be that of a competent, musically literate, individual performer with supplementary skills in music technology, musical direction, arranging, songwriting and musicology.

Entry is through the CAO, with each applicant required to undergo an entry assessment. There are no exit awards.

The programme will produce its first set of graduates in 2016. Typical envisaged career paths include Performing Artist, Songwriter, Arranger, Session Musician, Teacher, Composer, and Recording Technician. Many of the students expressed an interest in pursuing Masters Studies, although no direct follow on programme is available as yet.

Related programmes within CSM are the BA (Hons) in Theatre & Drama Studies and the BMus (Hons), both of which share modules with the popular music programme. There are occasional transfers between the BMus (Hons) and the BA (Hons) in Popular Music.

Enrolment in the first year of the programme (direct entry 2013) was 27 students. This has since risen to 34 – 36. Pass rates are very good with only one or two students repeating or deferring.

#### 1.2. Major Changes Now Proposed

Since the initial validation of the programme the number of electives available to students has been expanded significantly. Histo-Cultural Perspectives (MUSC7026) was added to open up secondary teaching as a possible career path for graduates, fulfilling the specific subject requirements for registration with the Teaching Council. More advanced 'Arranging' (MUSC8093 and MUSC 8094) and 'Songwriting' modules (MUSC8091 and MUSC8092) were demanded by students to follow the two initially offered, and Pop History electives (MUSC8095 and MUSC8096) were also added to the suite due to popular demand. These changes to the elective suite have already been implemented and some students did indicate their intention to go on to a teaching career.

Therefore, there are no major changes proposed in this review.

## 2. BACHELOR OF ARTS IN THEATRE AND DRAMA STUDIES

### 2.1. Programme Summary

The BA (Hons) in Theatre and Drama Studies is a four-year ab-initio degree at NFQ Level 8 attracting 240 ECTS credits. The degree was first validated in 2012 and is delivered in full-time and ACCS modes.

All students receive an intensive and mandatory actor training in the first two years, plus introductory modules in Theatre Technology, Design, Theatre History and Musical Theatre. In years three and four, students take mandatory performance ensemble modules and, in addition, take a set of electives which prepare them for a particular career path. Students are given their elective choices where possible, but there are some, such as Actor Performance Prep/Platform, where not all can be facilitated.

Entry is through the CAO, with each applicant required to undergo an entry assessment. There are no exit awards.

The programme will produce its first set of graduates in 2016. Typical envisaged career paths include Acting, Directing, Scriptwriting, Stage and Production Management, Sound and Lighting Design, Dramaturgy, and Academic Studies.

Related programmes within CSM are the BA (Hons) in Popular Music and the BMus (Hons), both of which share modules with the Theatre and Drama programme.

Enrolment in the first year of the programme (direct entry 2013) was 20 students and this has more or less been maintained in 2015 with 18 students. Pass rates are generally good with very few failures.

### 2.2. Major Changes Now Proposed

Proposed changes are;

- The re-ordering of the content of the suite of dance modules and the renaming of them as Dance 1-4. This makes Dance a more recognisable 'stream' which is at the request of the original validation panel.

- Some changes in the production studies modules which changes the order so that Stage Management can be taught first. Production Studies 3 – Stage Management (DRAM8023) is now renamed Stage Management and taken in Semester 3 rather than the previous Semester 7, while Production Studies 1 (Production Management) & 2 (Arts Management) are both taken later than previously in the programme.

- The introduction of an elective Theatre Craft Internship (No Code Yet) allows the student to gain credit under the tutelage of a staff mentor for work done within an internal production as part of a production team. This module is one-to-one in nature and there is a considerable list of incompatible modules which ensures that the student does not get credit for similar work which has already been awarded credit.

## B. PANEL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. OVERALL RECOMMENDATION TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL ON REVALIDATION

Contingent upon confirmation of the successful completion of the internal programme and module moderation process, the Panel **recommends to Academic Council that the programmes listed above be revalidated** for a further five years or until the next Programmatic Review, whichever is sooner, with effect from 1 September 2016.

Other than Registrar's Office approval of the programme and module specifications on conclusion of internal moderation, no conditions are attached to this recommendation.

### 2. GENERAL

2.1. **Commendation:** The Panel recognises the unique environment which has been created in CIT-CSM. This is in part to do with the superb building and facilities but also the cooperation across all the programmes within the School which gives students an exposure to a much broader curriculum than they might otherwise expect. The sharing of an extensive set of elective modules (though it has its potential pitfalls) is to be applauded.

2.2. **Commendation**: Special commendation is due to Head of Department John O' Connor for spearheading two very innovative programmes and getting them to the stage of producing their first graduates.

2.3. **Commendation:** The Panel was highly impressed with the students it met. In particular there was a spirit of openness and keenness to add value to the process that was excellent to see. It was clear from these interactions that there is a very open, respectful, partnership approach between staff and students in the School.

### 3. ENTRANT AND GRADUATE PROFILE, AWARD AND PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

3.1 In the first two years of the BATDS programme, all students receive an intensive and mandatory actor training. In subsequent years all students continue their actor training through a series of 10 credit Performance Ensemble modules - one in each semester (Dram 8016, 8017, 8019, 8020), with a number of opportunities for public performance. Students choose their remaining modules from a large number of streams of electives such as sound design, lighting design, directing, script-writing and so on. While the course schedule describes the educational aim of the programme *as 'to provide a course of training and study that will equip its graduates to engage appropriately with professional activity in the field of Theatre and Drama….'* CIT's prospectus describes the programme as '*a four year programme that centres on theatre performance training with supporting modules to facilitate wider career options.'*

The Panel formed the early impression that the programme was primarily aimed at actor training. In talking with students it was clear that this was their expectation on entering

the programme. CSM staff explained to the Panel that it was not possible (due to resources) to give all students intensive one-to-one tuition through the third and fourth year. Only some students could therefore take Performance Prep (Dram8049 and DRAM8041) and Performance Platform (DRAM8046 and DRAM8045). These modules appear to be the most sought after and entry to them is competitive, based on an audition/performance. It was clear from interaction with staff that the original hope for the programme was that all students could be given the intensive one-to-one tuition required for these modules but that this is not possible due to the resources required. All students do continue to get exposure to actor training through the mandatory performance ensemble which is 10 credits in each of the final four semesters.

During the session with the students the Panel wished to find out what the students' expectation of the programme had been coming into it and, in the light of the selection process for those elective modules, whether that view had changed. In the Panel's view the students coming in viewed the programme as primarily an acting one, albeit one that also gave exposure to other technical aspects of theatre. Those who had not succeeded in getting on the advanced acting modules (acting platform) said that they had been disappointed, but that by specialising through other streams they had subsequently added to the skills they wanted to learn, rather than having a change of mind. None of them liked the fact that places on the 'platform' were capped, however most understood that a lack of resources was the reason for it and felt that, as with all auditions, some people were not going to be selected.

In fact, when two students who had been successful in getting onto the acting platform decided to go in a different direction in fourth year, only four people went forward for the now vacant spaces, meaning that others were happy with the new streams they were pursuing.

There is a danger, in the Panel's view, that if students come in expecting an exclusively acting programme that they can either claim that the course did not deliver what it had advertised or, simply feel that they had not succeeded in a critical part of the programme.

The Panel acknowledges the difficulty of not 'falling between stools' as staff made it clear that everyone would be offered the performance platform if resources were available.

Students also stated that they would like more feedback as to why one student was chosen over another. There seemed to be some difference of opinion here in that staff stated that clear assessment criteria were given to the students before the audition and detailed feedback afterwards. The students however felt they lacked knowledge of how they could 'better their chances'. This may be simply a communication problem as staff did say they didn't want to discourage students by stating that they had 'failed' or were not good enough and it may be difficult to give satisfying feedback in circumstances where students still performed very well.

While students felt that more clarity and communication was needed, they accepted auditions as a normal part of life in the theatre and showed great maturity in accepting the decision process. It is worth noting they acclaimed the dedication shown by the lecturers across the board.

3.2 **Recommendation:** The Panel recommends that a more consistent message be given to both incoming students and students already on the programme so that they understand that the programme provides a broad training in theatre and drama and is not exclusively an acting programme. In fact students are enabled to take off in a variety of directions and develop further in a number of theatre practice-related specialisms. While the core of the programme is acting, the Panel believes that describing it specifically as theatre performance training may be misleading. Clarity on this matter may allow the course team to better manage the selection process for sought after modules such as the Performance Platform.

3.3 **Recommendation:** In the light of 3.2 above we recommend that staff re-examine how the Performance Platform modules in particular are represented to the students.

3.4 The educational aim of the Bachelor of Arts in Pop Music (**BAPM)** is 'to equip graduates with the musical, technological, business and interpersonal skills necessary to operate professionally within the popular music industry. The Panel felt that the programme was light on issues relating to the 'Business' of pop music. While Production Studies 1 (DRAM7020) deals with topics such as Marketing, Law and Risk Assessment the students felt that it came too early in the programme. They felt that a module that 'can set you up to interact with the industry would be helpful in regards to funding'. The focus is currently on funding from the arts council but neglects how to find funding from places like "crowd funding".  The students felt that the module in second year did cover some of the information they needed but not all and specifically mentioned that an entrepreneurship Module would enhance their studies. Such a module was offered to students but involved travel so very few students took it up.

**Recommendation:** The Panel recommends consideration of additional business related studies to better equip the students for those aspects of the industry.

## 4. PROGRAMME OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE

4.1. **Commendation:** The Panel would specifically like to commend the great commitment and dedication shown by staff as confirmed by the Panel's interaction with students. In particular the Panel heard of the personal involvement and care shown by some staff beyond the call of duty.

4.2 **Commendation:**  The Panel notes the small drop out/failure rate on both programmes. This may have to do with the students' passion for the career they have chosen, but also great credit is due to the School in terms of the operation of the programmes.

4.3 **Commendation:** The ensemble approach to the Pop Music degree appears to be working well. There seemed to be very little fallout in terms of particular ensembles not working well and the management of this is to be commended.

4.4 The students were very happy with the opportunities they had to enhance their performance skills and their exposure to multiple facets of the production process based on a team approach to many performances. However, they felt that their showcases

(particularly in their final year) should have more exposure to both the public and the industry. For example, a member of the Panel who is local and a potential employer of graduates was not aware of students' final showcase performances.

**Recommendation:** The Panel recommends that the programme staff ensure that the public visibility of student showcases is optimised, by improving communications and interaction with both the theatre and Music industries, particularly with potential employers of graduates**.**


5. PROPOSED PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION (INCL. DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT)

5.1. The Panel was universally impressed with the broad range of modules available to students on both programmes and the value of the School hosting three undergraduate programmes in tandem with the Postgraduate programmes in Music Technology. The breadth and scope of elective choices open up great opportunities for the academic and professional development of each learner.

While both programmes have core modules (Popular Ensemble Workshop on the BAPM and Performance Ensemble on the BATDS), there is a vast number of elective modules available to students, some of which appear in more than one semester. Students have been universally positive about how they are guided and advised on their elective choices. However, the Panel feels that there may a possibility of individual students selecting a set of modules which together do not meet the educational aims of the programmes.

**Recommendation:** The Panel considers it indispensable that the programme team continue to provide strong guidance on the specialist strands running through the programmes. In the Panel's view, such guidance is indispensable to help learners navigate what may appear as a bewildering array of modules and to develop the learners' individual specialisms in a cohesive and effective manner. The Panel further recommends that this guidance should be formalised and documented as far as possible (e.g. website information, information sheets combined with recurrent information events etc.), to ensure continuity of support independent of individual staff members.

5.2 **Recommendation:** The Panel recommends that both programme boards review elective regulations relating to pre-requisites and incompatible modules and continue to be vigilant to the possibility of a student gaining repeated credit for very similar work.

5.3 It was mentioned a number of times that the development of a student's musicianship is a longer term endeavour and that progression is often not linear. Assessment by performance of musicianship skills is best done by performance towards the end of the learning period with fewer marks allocated earlier. The Panel is aware of an implementation group set up on receipt of the interim report of the M & S review group. Among the issues being discussed by the implementation group is the possibility of year-long or 'long thin' modules for performance related studies. The Panel believes that this may be appropriate in the early stages of programmes where students need time to bed in their musical development.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the school works in conjunction with the M&S Implementation Group (and Academic Council) to investigate the possibility of the implementation of a small number of 'long-thin' modules where deemed appropriate.

## 6. MODULES

This section presents the findings and recommendations from an indicative review of modules carried out by the members of the Peer Review Panel. The Panel notes that a comprehensive survey of module specifications could not be carried out in the context of this review.

Therefore, a recommendation of the Panel to revalidate the programme(s) under review is contingent on the successful completion of the subsequent internal programme and module moderation process carried out by, or on behalf of, the CIT Registrar's Office. The Panel wished to include the notes below to demonstrate the level of discussion and engagement on particular modules.

6.1     **DRAM8022 Production Studies 1 (DRAM7020**): This is in both courses and looks at issues such as raising money from the traditional way of sponsorship to newer ways such as crowd funding. The law component covers an overview of all legal areas, from copyright to legal health and safety obligations if organising an event. It should be noted the failure rate of this module has improved. There are tutorials for this which are divided between the BA (Hons) in Pop Music and the BA (Hons) in Theatre & Drama.

   The Panel has already recommended additional material of this nature for the BAPM and notes that this module will be appearing later in the BATD. Please see Recommendation 3.4.

6.2     **MUSC6020 Contextual Harmonies:** A *Question was asked on the genres of music studied in this module.* The response was that all genres of music are studied and this is a mandatory module placed in semesters one and two. Effectively this is a prerequisite to a wider choice of electives. For example, music history starts in this module and picks up again in an elective stream. Harmony in Popular Music is studied throughout the mandatory core of the course.

6.3     **MUSC8072 Arranging 1:** *The Question was asked as to what is the split between composition and arranging*. The focus is on the arranging side. Some students do either their own material or take material from class mates and work on an arrangement for that material. There is a mix of pre modern and pop music. As to song writing, the students have enough at their disposal to determine their course and genre as all genres of music are studied from Blues to Rockabilly.

6.4     **Theatre Craft Internship (No Code Yet)**: This is a new elective module to be taken once by students in either 4, 6 or 8. The proposal is to bring it on initially in Semester 4 and then to develop it to post year one throughout the programme. The module allows the student to gain credit under the tutelage of a staff mentor for work done within an internal production as part of a production team. This module is one-to-one in nature

and there is a considerable list of incompatible modules which ensures that the student does not get credit for similar work which has already been awarded credit.

This module involves individual mentoring of students which ensures that there is proper scrutiny of the nature and standard of the work.

**Recommendation:** The Panel is happy to **recommend** the validation of this module as one to be taken **once** throughout the programme on the basis that the one-to-one mentoring system can be preserved. We further recommend that the programme board should review the list of incompatible modules after the first running of this module to ensure course integrity. The board may wish to develop this stream further in the future through the Registrar's Office and Academic Council.

6.5 **DRAM7018 Sound Design and DRAM8003 Advanced Sound Design**: The possibility of specialised sound design in the business is very viable. The latter is both a theoretical and practical module. This module deals with all areas of sound from creation & design to implementation.

6.6 **All Modules: Recommendation:** The Panel notes that many resource lists across all programmes include no resources published within the last 10 years. Quite a number of listings also make no mention of any online respectively electronic resources. While in many cases this may be appropriate, in others it may indicate that the resource selection has not been looked at for a while, meaning that learners may miss out on relevant developments in research or pedagogy. Therefore, the resource listings of every module should be reviewed and updated as necessary before the module is approved in the internal module moderation process.

# 7. OTHER FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. None

# 8. DEROGATIONS SOUGHT

8.1. None

## PROGRAMME FINALISATION

*[This section is completed by the **CIT Registrar's Office.***

*It records the implementation of any panel requirements and the completion of the internal module moderation process. Confirmation of completion by the CIT Registrar's Office is required for both before the programmes can be submitted to the CIT Academic Council for revalidation.]*

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF PANEL REQUIREMENTS

   Not applicable.

2. MODULE AND PROGRAMME MODERATION

   *[Please use this section to record any recommendations which do not fit well with the categories above, including on the review process itself where applicable.]*

   7.1 **Commendation / Recommendation / Requirement:** …

   7.2 …

9. DEROGATIONS SOUGHT

   *[In this section, please note any requests for derogation from CIT policy on Free Choice, the semester maximum of 4 terminal exams, or large credit modules made or required. Briefly indicate the rationale for such requests where given.)*

   8.1 [Programme XX / Semester YY: Nature of derogation / rationale where given] …

## C. PROGRAMME FINALISATION

*[This section will be completed by the **CIT Registrar's Office.***

*It records the implementation of any panel requirements and the completion of the internal module moderation process. Confirmation of completion by the CIT Registrar's Office is required for both before the programmes can be submitted to the CIT Academic Council for revalidation.]*

## 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF PANEL REQUIREMENTS

## 4. MODULE AND PROGRAMME MODERATION

## D. APPENDIX – TIMETABLE OF PHASE 2 MEETINGS

Programmatic Review of CIT Cork School of Music - Phase 2 (March 14 - 15, 2016)

**General Phase 2 Timetable**

| Time | DAY 1 | |
|---|---|---|
| 12:00 - 13:00 | Private Panel Meeting (Complete Phase 2 Panel) - incl. brief Registrar's Office induction (*CSM Boardroom, R 321*) | |
| 13:00 - 13:30 | **Brief departmental self-presentations** (key stats; mini-SWOT; programme summary - history, developm.) | |
| 13:30 - 14:30 | *Panel Lunch* | |
|  | *BMus - Masters Programmes*<br>*Venue: CSM Boardroom (R 321)* | *BA in Popular Music / BA in Theatre & Drama St.*<br>*Venue: (R 322/323)* |
| 14:30 - 15:00 | Private Panel Meeting BMus - Masters | Private Panel Meeting BAPM / BATDS |
| 15:00 - 17:00 | **Operation & Performance, incl. changes since last PR**<br>*(w/ short tea & coffee break at 16:00)* | **Operation & Performance, incl. changes since last PR**<br>*(w/ short tea & coffee break at 16:00)* |
| 17:00 - 17:30 | **Current Students** | **Current Students** |
| 17:30 - 17:45 | Brief Private Panel Meeting | Brief Private Panel Meeting |
| 19:**30** | *Panel Dinner (Pembroke Restaurant, Imperial Hotel) - Complete Phase 2 Panel and CSM Senior Managers* | |

| Time | DAY 2 | |
|---|---|---|
|  | *BMus - Masters Programmes*<br>*Venue: CSM Boardroom (R 321)* | *BA in Popular Music / BA in Theatre & Drama St.*<br>*Venue: (R 322/323)* |
| 8:30 - 9:00 | Private Panel Meeting BMus - Masters | Private Panel Meeting BAPM-TDS |
| 9:00 - 10:45 | **Programme Changes Now Proposed** | **Programme Changes Now Proposed** |
| 10:45 - 11:30 | *Tea & Coffee Break, followed by Walk-Through of CSM Facilities (All Panels) - Meet at: CSM Boardroom* | |
| 11:30 - 13:00 | **General Module Review** | **General Module Review** |
| 13:00 - 14:15 | *Private Working Lunch BMus-M Panel - Draft Findings* | *Private Working Lunch BAPM-DTS Panel - Draft Findings* |
| 14:15 - 14:45 | General Panel Close-Out (Complete Phase 2 Panel) - Main PR Findings & Recommend. (*CSM Boardroom*) | |
| 14:45 | Brief Feedback to CSM Senior Staff | |