

MUSI113: Introduction to Songwriting



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

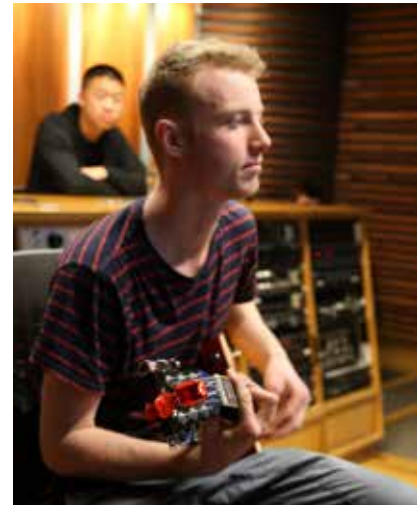
Overview

The aim is for students who already have some musical experience to develop a richer appreciation of songwriting and production techniques, and to develop extra skills for their own compositional practices. This will be done through a combination of practical assignments and exposure to a wide array of songs that demonstrate particular techniques.

You will work towards producing complete songs that are realised in written and recorded form, and will be able to work in

any musical style of your choosing. The emphasis of the course will be on you learning how to best realise your creative ideas in that particular style.

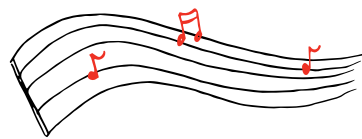
The course will cover the basic principles of songwriting including lyrical themes/structure, formal design, melodic/harmonic/rhythmic language, and the basic principles of realising songs in a Digital Audio Workstation environment using MIDI and live recording.



Course structure

The paper will comprise five two-hour sessions per week, with two dedicated to principles of songwriting, two dedicated to realising songs in audio form, and one dedicated to presenting ideas in a workshop format with lecturers and other students. The songwriting/technology streams will converge throughout the

semester with ideas from each informing the other as students work towards their finished songs.



Course outline

Week 1

January 4: Lecture 1a - Songwriting

Historical trends: from songwriting teams to self-sufficient artists and back

January 5: Lecture 1b - Production Setup

Components of a DAW (controller, audio/MIDI interface, software, speakers); basic set up (configuring controllers/interface); signal flow from source to speaker; building a Reason rack

January 6: Lecture 1c

Practical workshop

Week 2

January 9: Lecture 2a - Song Structures

Basic structures: 12-bar blues, AABA, Verse-Chorus, Verse-Chorus-Bridge

January 10: Lecture 2b - Song Structures

Complex structures: Double bridges/interludes; terminally-climactic form; cyclic

January 11: Lecture 2c - MIDI

MIDI protocol; MIDI sequencing; Transport controls

January 12: Lecture 2d - Recording Techniques

Real-time recording; Step recording; Operating levels

January 13: Lecture 2e

Practical workshop

Week 3

January 16: Lecture 3a - Lyrics

Vocabulary, Imagery and Rhyme

January 17: Lecture 3b - Lyrics

Metre, Rhythm and Verbal Space

January 18: Lecture 3c - MIDI Editing

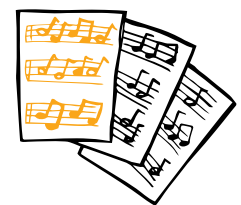
Note, velocity, duration; fixing mistakes; quantisation

January 19: Lecture 3d - Drum Tracks

Programming drums using Redrum; choosing drum sounds; editing drum sounds; step sequencing; common drum patterns; creating multiple patterns

January 20: Lecture 3e

Practical workshop. Assignment 1 due





Week 4

January 23: Lecture 4a - Harmony

Harmonic archetypes: 12-bar blues, loops, riffs, progressions

January 24: Lecture 4b - Harmony

Advanced harmonic techniques: sequences, modulations, chromaticism

January 25: Lecture 4c – Samplers and Synthesizers

Working with soft-samplers; understanding audio envelopes; editing samplers; using samplers/synthesizers to create chord progressions

January 26: Lecture 4d – Loops and Chord/Melody Player

Working with loops; Apple loops, REX files; using Dr Loop player; using loops to shape texture. Using the Chord/Melody player in reason to create harmonic/melodic structure

January 27: Lecture 4e

Practical workshop

Week 5

January 30: Auckland Anniversary Day

No lecture

January 31: Lecture 5b - Melody

Melodic Contours: arched, static, blues fall; structure vs. embellishments

February 1: Lecture 5c – Texture

Instrumental layers; stylistic and historical combinations of instruments

February 2: Lecture 5d - Arranging in the Studio

Building a song; moving and editing patterns. Recording digital audio

February 3: Lecture 5e

Practical workshop. Assignment 2 due

Week 6

February 6: Waitangi Day

No lecture

February 7: Lecture 6b – Complete Songs

Characters, Personae, Perspective

February 8: Lecture 6c – Complete Songs

Relationships between lyrics and music

February 9: Lecture 6d – Creative effects

Using effects to heighten musical interest and support lyrical narrative

February 10: Lecture 6e

Practical workshop

Week 7

February 13: Lecture 7a - Complete Song Forms

Ballads, "experimental" songs, contemporary styles

February 14: Lecture 7b - Mixing

Understanding the mixing console; signal flow; auxiliary sends, sub-groups

February 15: Lecture 7c – Mixing/Workshop

Basic mixing techniques; depth/panning/soundbox; exporting audio

February 16: Lecture 7d

Practical workshop

February 17: Lecture 7e

Presentation and reflection of Assignment 3



FOR MORE INFORMATION:



waikato.ac.nz/go/songwriting



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WHERE THE WORLD IS GOING
TE AHUNGA O TE AO