

Course outline: Composing for Film and Television

The MA in Composing for Film and Television is a specialisation within the broader MA in Film and Television.

This course is developmental and progressive.

In year one, students are taught the techniques and contexts which inform writing music for the screen. The first term comprises an intensive process during which students compose to a variety of exercises, each one chosen to focus on a particular aspect of film composition. These exercises are completed by each student and discussed in seminars and individually assessed. In term two, further exercises concentrate on issues having to do with scoring for live instruments, the combination of live and electro-acoustic elements and the integration a limited range of sound design into film scores. In addition, students will begin engaging with projects generated by other students at the NFTS. This process will continue and dominate the third term. Each student contribution to those films will also be assessed. Students will also participate in visits from industry professionals.

In year two, students' activities will be dominated primarily by work generated from other parts of the school. The composing students are very much in demand working on potentially 6 Graduation Projects while also having the opportunity to score for the Graduation Shows from the Television Entertainment Department. Lectures, seminars and the occasional workshop will be provided to clarify and expand issues arising from those projects. As in year one, students will also participate in visits from industry professionals.

Year One

“Springboard” Cross Specialisation Introductory Workshop – An introduction to the moving image, looking at cinematic and televisual language through the prism of storytelling

Non-collaborative Workshops – Through a structured series of exercises and seminars the students explore and develop different techniques of film music composition

Without Images – Sound Designers, Composers and Editors create a narrative or abstract sound piece

Animation Projects – exercises working with sound and music in a variety of animation styles

Sound & Music in Documentary – A documentary film which introduces the aesthetics involved in the making of a visual essay, a style of documentary making which promotes an understanding of factual storytelling within a poetic framework.

Beyond Time – a short fiction film which focuses on visual storytelling

First Year Film - Throughout the first year ideas and scripts will be developed for a 5-10minute fiction film which is shot and edited during the autumn term.

Investigative Documentary – a documentary film created from in depth research and film.

Screen Studies – Participation in Screen Arts programme and discussions to include all aspects of film analysis.

Music Composition - Composition for narrative drama, composition for non-fiction projects, commercials & stings, and themes.

Year Two

Digital Film Project (Cross-Specialisation with Fiction Directors) – The composers score a 25-minute Fiction project shot on digital format.

Graduation Films (Documentary, Fiction, Animation) – Composing for the graduation films provides a further opportunity to develop the creative and technical skills required for screen music composition for documentary, animation and fiction.