



## BMus (Hons) POPULAR MUSIC PERFORMANCE - AUDITION PROCEDURE (2020 entry)

### Introduction

Each year, Leeds Arts University recruits a cohort of 36 student musicians to the following principal studies: 12 x vocals (male & female), 6 x keyboard, 6 x electric guitar, 6 x bass guitar and 6 x drum kit.

The audition process is designed to assess your ability in popular music performance, production and composition. Places on the course are offered based on the demonstration of your potential to develop in these areas over the three years of the course.

### Overview

The audition is structured as a 25-minute practical audition and interview session conducted by the course leader, and an instrumental/vocal specialist.

The audition process is designed to assess the following:

Criteria	Assessment method
Instrumental/vocal proficiency (equivalent to grade 8 standard)	Practical performance of a set piece
Musicianship	
Energy and presence in performance	
Production skills	Practical performance of your own <b>original</b> song or instrumental composition
Composition skills	<b>OR</b> Practical performance of an existing song, re-arranged by you
Stylistic understanding	Practical performance of set and/or original pieces
General communication skills	Panel Q&A

## PART 1:

The first part of your audition is a practical performance. Instrumental and/or vocal performance skills are key to success on the course and assessed at this point.

You should choose **one** of the set pieces from the list below, as appropriate to your instrument/voice.

BASS GUITAR	1. <i>Scar Tissue</i> - Red Hot Chili Peppers
	2. <i>Hysteria</i> - Muse
DRUM KIT	1. <i>Fire</i> - The Jimi Hendrix Experience
	2. <i>I Got You (I Feel Good)</i> - James Brown
GUITAR	1. <i>Slow Dancing in a Burning Room</i> - John Mayer
	2. <i>Are You Gonna Go My Way</i> - Lenny Kravitz
KEYBOARDS	1. <i>Life On Mars</i> - David Bowie (featuring Rick Wakeman)
	2. <i>Pinball Wizard</i> - Elton John & The Who
VOCAL *See Additional Notes for Vocal Candidates on Page 5	1. <i>When the Party's Over</i> - Billie Eilish
	2. <i>Human</i> - Rag n Bone Man

## PART 2:

In the second part of your audition, you will be asked to demonstrate your production and/or composition skills. You will be asked to perform **one** of the following:

- An original song or instrumental composition of your own, performed live by you to a backing track of your own making;
- An original song or instrumental composition of your own, performed live and accompanied by yourself.
- An interpretation of an existing song or instrumental composition performed and re-arranged by you (either performed live to a backing track of your own making, or accompanied by yourself).

You will be asked to produce some form of musical notation for the music you present, whichever option you choose. This might be either a score, a chord/melody chart, a rhythm chart, a lyric sheet, a part sheet, or some combination of these as appropriate.

If your second performance piece is an existing song (option c above), you will be asked to articulate the ways in which your interpretation/re-arrangement differs significantly and creatively from the original song or composition.

## Audition walk-through

You will be on site at Leeds Arts University for around 60-75 minutes in total. Your warm-up and audition will take up to 45 minutes. You are encouraged to arrive up to 30 minutes before your allocated audition time to allow time for registration and warming up.

When you arrive at Leeds Arts University Blenheim Walk site, you will be greeted by a Student Ambassador.

15 minutes before your practical audition, the Student Ambassador will escort you to a space where you will be able to warm up and prepare.

At your allocated audition time, the Student Ambassador will escort you to the audition location.

The audition panel will consist of the BMus (Hons.) Popular Music Performance course leader and a specialist in your chosen study (voice, guitar, keyboards, bass or drum kit).

Activity	Rationale
Set equipment	Prepare for performance
Perform set piece 1 or 2	Assess instrumental/vocal equivalence of grade 8 performance
Musicianship discussion	
Perform original composition/arrangement	Assess production and composition skills
Panel Questions	Establish motivation, ambition commitment, and reason for choosing to study at Leeds Arts University.  Assess confidence and communication skills.
Your questions	You can ask any questions you have about the course and University.

## Equipment

Leeds Arts University will provide:

- **Stage piano (Yamaha Montage 8)**; if you require a second keyboard, you should bring this to the audition.
- **Drum kit (5-piece Yamaha Custom Live)**; drummers should bring their own breakables (sticks, cymbals).
- **Guitar amplifier (Yamaha THR100D head + 2x12 cab)**; guitarists should provide their own guitar, effects pedals and leads.
- **Bass guitar amplifier (Aguilar Tonehammer 300watt head + 4x10 cab)**; bass players should provide their own bass guitar, effects pedals and leads.
- **Stage monitoring**; suitable for monitoring a backing track.
- **Music stands and lighting**; suitable for reading the score of the set/portfolio piece.

If you need to play a backing track for your portfolio piece, you should bring a suitable .mp3 player.

## Notes

- Candidates will provide their own backing tracks and sheet music
- We have introduced a Leeds Arts University music theory course and test which we will recognise as the equivalent of an external certificated Grade 5 theory exam (ABRSM, Trinity, Rock School).

This means that if you have not passed a Grade V music theory examination before enrolling with us, you will be tutored and supported by our specialist staff to successfully complete and pass the Leeds Arts University music theory course during your first year.

Our music theory course is staged and will take you from Grade I-V refreshing and developing your understanding of the language of music. Our test is multiple choice and we will ensure that you are familiar with the format by the time you take the test.

## International students

Applications to the course are welcomed from international candidates. Where such candidates are not able to attend auditions in person:

1. Upload a video of your practical set piece performance to a suitable video sharing platform (YouTube, Vimeo or Weibo) for remote review by the course leader.
2. Upload a video of your practical performance of an original song, instrumental composition, or arrangement of an existing song to a suitable video-sharing platform (YouTube, Vimeo or Weibo) for remote review by the Course Leader.
3. Complete a Skype interview with the Programme Director and Course Leader which investigates your:
  - ambition and motivation within popular music and for enrolling on the course;
  - musicianship;
  - skills and creativity in production and composition, such as is evidenced by the original music submission.

## Additional Notes for Vocal Candidates

**You are not required to perform either of the set choices in their original key**

You do not have to perform the songs in the same key as the recordings made famous by the original recording artists. Instead, you should identify the keys that would suit your voice and allow you to perform to the best of your ability, and download a backing track in the relevant key from a site such as the below:

[www.karaoke-version.co.uk](http://www.karaoke-version.co.uk) - [Billie Eilish - When The Party's Over](#)

or

<https://www.karaoke-version.co.uk/custombackingtrack/rag-n-bone-man/human.html>

Note that at the bottom of the webpage, next to the pricing icon, is the ability to change the key of the backing track to suit your performance.

You should bring your backing track, in your preferred key, and with a suitable playback device such as a smartphone, laptop computer or .mp3 player with a standard mini jack audio connector with you to your audition.

The choice of songs is designed to allow you to demonstrate your vocal control in expressing the song with presence and emotion.

You are not required to perform a note-for-note, breath-for-breath facsimile copy of the original artist's recorded performances. Instead, we would much prefer you to interpret whichever song you choose for your performance in a way that perhaps makes the song your own.

**Also:** do not forget that the set piece is only \*one\* of the two songs that you will be asked to perform. The second song is entirely of your own choosing and may even be of your own composition. So, this second piece is a golden opportunity to perform with energy and presence, and to demonstrate your strengths in performance and creativity.