

Over the years I've taught a broad selection of subjects in conservatoria, colleges and music schools. Here follows a list of courses on offer for vocalists, instrumentalists and composers.

Some subjects are suited to one-off workshops for large or small groups (eg rhythmic training for choirs, or a specialized area like Chord-scale theory). Others, like Aural Training, require the routine of a longer period to build a basic foundation, or profit from a one-to-one situation.

Writing down music/Notational theory

chords & symbols, scales & modes
notation, manuscript & part-writing. Computer notation
rhythmic notation, metric modulation
instrumentation, transposition & acoustics

Why does a staff have 5 lines? Why not 4 or 6? Why does the first mode start on C and not on A? An understanding of the history of music notation provides an entertaining insight into the underlying musical structures of melody, harmony and rhythm.

Understanding harmonic styles

functional jazz harmony: classical roots (1920-1950's)
blues harmony, stylistic distinctions
modal harmony (1960-)
modern jazz/pop harmony & compositional styles. (1970 to now)
practical applications of chord/scale theory.

Why are 3 chords enough? Enough for what? .. and which 3 chords?
If music can be compared to language, then harmony is the underlying grammar and syntax. Like language, music changes over time and place as composers and improvising musicians adapt harmonic structures to develop their own styles.

Learning to listen/ Solfege and aural training

Tonal recognition & memory
melodic training: dictation -from ear to page...
from page to ear: singing exercises
tonal recognition & chord progressions.
transcription training.

The Art of Microtiming.
rhythmic training: reading & timing
the structures of rhythm
rhythmic styles: swing, rock & funk, latin & afro, balkan & flamenco...
rhythmic notation and metric modulation

Analysing improvisation

Solo transcription.
Analytic approaches
Improvisational styles
Differing approaches: historical v. personal

Why are Miles Davis, Charlie Parker and John Coltrane instantly recognisable? Where did Ella Fitzgerald find her inspiration? What makes a good solo, and how much thought goes into improvisation anyway? Solo analysis provides insight into the musical thinking of improvising musicians from all corners of the (musical) world.

Analysing composition

A piece of music - whether a song, a sonata or a symphony- has a form. Not only a beginning, a middle and an end, but a storyline. An integrated analysis of the 3-way interaction of melodic, rhythmic and harmonic structures within a piece can explain both the form and development of the narrative line. Highly recommended for composers & writers: an endless source of ideas and inspiration. "*A good composer does not imitate, he steals*" - Igor Stravinsky (possibly stealing from T.S.Eliot....)

Small-band Arranging

writing for the rhythm section:

- piano/keyboard
- guitar & bass parts
- drums

2 & 3-part writing for melody instruments & voice.

setting up the score and parts

A basic course for beginners, but dealing with some of the trickier subjects: how much.. and what.. to write for the drummer? How much information does an improvising musician actually want/need? And if you can handle 3-part writing, anything more is a breeze....

Bigband and Orchestral Arranging

4, 5-part and more.

voicing techniques

specialized instrumentation: strings/brass/woodwind/percussion/accordeons

writing for vocal ensembles

standard lineups: bigband, orchestra, wind- & brassbands

handling large scores... and big ideas.

The list of possible subjects is actually endless.. depending on personal taste, needs & interest. I'm always happy to delve into subjects I know absolutely nothing about.. yet.

Songwriting

finding a personal voice

writing lyrics: style and subject matter

relationship text, form & harmonic language

arranging (where necessary).

"Listen, they're playing our song..." we all recognise the situation, but how do you write a song - usually uniquely personal- which possesses enough emotional resonance to appeal to perfect strangers? Songwriting is not just about technique and craftsmanship, but about conveying a wider emotional meaning.. creating resonance.

The History of Jazz

Roots: 1860-1900

Changes in styles 1900-1990

Key players: the movers and the shakers.

A broad overview of the history and development of jazz styles.

Jazz History II: Connections

A series of 8 workshops about the relationship between jazz styles and social history:

1. From New Orleans to Chicago: being sold up the river.
2. Composition v. improvisation
3. Cool v. Hot: debunking the clichés
4. Coltrane: hard bop to free and the social scene
5. How free is free?
6. Latin jazz
7. The rise and fall of jazzrock
8. The 80's: a jazz resurgence