# MUS 311

## Digital Music: Performance, Remixing and DJ-ing

S2 Day 2016

*Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies*

## Contents

# General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Convenor, lecturer, tutor
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Y3A-155
By appointment

Credit points
3

Prerequisites
39cp

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit builds practical skills to mix music for a live audience. Lectures and production lab workshops develop the techniques necessary for DJ-ing and laptop performance. The broad objective is to develop students' awareness of mixing techniques in the live performance of electronic music, to develop creative skills in constructing studio-based DJ sets, and to collaborate creatively with colleagues. Students are introduced to Ableton Live software as a tool for laptop performance and production. This unit caters to a variety of skill levels with both beginning and advanced students welcome.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

# Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance

Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection

Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques

Use mixing technologies

Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques

# Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Due |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mix Analysis | 30% | 5pm 13 September |
| Peer assessment | 15% | Weeks 9-11 |
| Live Performance | 55% | Weeks 9-11 |

## Mix Analysis

Due: **5pm 13 September**
Weighting: **30%**

## Assessment Outline

For this assessment, you will analyse a short 'megamix' and learn how to recognise when music has been edited, looped, sampled, remixed, or otherwise manipulated. In addition, you will draw on relevant research to explain the similarities and differences between this megamix and other types of sample-based music.

## Requirements

**PART 1** (700-800 words)

Write an analysis of a 'megamix' recording. (A link to the recording will be available on iLearn by the end of Week 1.) The analysis should address the following aspects of the recording. The items marked with an asterisk are the more important ones; you should devote more space to them than to the first item.

- What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of the mix?
- Compare one of the featured tracks with the original version of the track. Identify three aspects of the track (other than tempo) which have been changed for the purposes of the mix.*
- Analyse one segue (that is: a transition from one track to the next). Which elements of the segue are gradual and which elements are abrupt?*

**PART 2** (700-800 words)

Address the following questions:

- To what extent does the megamix above use techniques described by Robert Ratcliffe (2014)?
- Are the production techniques used in the megamix above closer to hip hop conventions or to EDM (electronic dance music) conventions? Draw on the essential readings available on iLearn, and remember to focus on *production techniques* rather than

the *style of music*.

## Assessment Criteria

Your analysis will be assessed according to the following criteria.

- Ability to compare a track in its original form with its appearance in the mix.

- Ability to analyse a segue.

- Precision of analysis.

- Level of engagement with scholarly research.

- Level of prose, grammar, and syntax.

## Submission Instructions

The assignment is due on Turnitin/iLearn by 5pm, Tuesday 13 September. Your first submission on Turnitin is final. Please check that you are submitting the correct file.

## Extensions and Late Penalties

The submission on Turnitin will attract a late penalty of 10% of the total possible mark per day (including weekends and public holidays). Assignments submitted 10 days late (or more) will not be accepted.

**Please note that late penalties accrue from 17:00:01 on the due date. It is strongly recommended that you aim to submit your work one day early.**

Extensions on the final version may be granted only if you have submitted an application for Disruption to Studies. Please see the 'Disruption to Studies' policy: http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html.


On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection

# Peer assessment

Due: **Weeks 9-11**
Weighting: **15%**

## Assessment Outline

For this assessment you will write peer-evaluations of five performances. You will be allocated five performances via iLearn by 5pm 9 September. In class time, you will be given advice on how to write effective, constructive feedback.

## Requirements

- You must use the peer-evaluation sheet provided in class as a template.

- The minimum word length *per evaluation* is 100 words. There is no upper word limit for

this task.

## Assessment Criteria

Peer-reviews will be assessed according to the following criteria.

- Number of reviews submitted.

- Ability to identify relevant strengths of each performance.

- Ability to identify potential areas for improvement in each performance.

## Submission Instructions

Your peer-evaluation sheet must be submitted to the MMCCS server on the same day as the performances that you have evaluated. The file that you submit should be named as follows: [Surname - ID number - Peer-evaluation - Week X].

Example:

**Renzo - 44441234 - Peer-evaluation - Week 9**

## Extensions and Late Penalties

Students who fail to peer-review their allocated performances may review performances scheduled for the following week, with a standard late penalty of 10% of the total possible mark per day. Students who fail to peer-review their allocated performances in the final week may be given an alternative performance to review 7 days later, with a standard late penalty of 10% of the total possible mark per day.

Extensions on peer-reviews may be granted at the convenor's discretion and only if you have submitted an application for Disruption to Studies. Please see the 'Disruption to Studies' policy: http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html.


On successful completion you will be able to:
- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance
- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection


# Live Performance

Due: **Weeks 9-11**
Weighting: **55%**

## Assessment Outline

In this assessment, you will perform a 10-minute DJ set using the Session View of Ableton Live, liaise with other students to ensure that you 'mix into' your set smoothly, and submit a self-evaluation sheet (available on iLearn). The performance schedule will be available on iLearn by 5pm Friday 9 September.

## Requirements

- The live mix must last for 10 minutes. You may use up to 2 minutes extra for transitions

> to and from your set.

- Ableton Live's Session View must be used as the 'hub' for the set. Turntables and/or other instruments and controllers may be used as supplements.

- You must submit your Live Set, a self-evaluation sheet (available on iLearn, 500-600 words), and a Set Tracklist to the MMCCS server by 5pm on the day prior to your performance.

- You will need to liaise with the people playing before and after you, to ensure that the overall tracklist is cohesive and that the mixing is seamless.

- All tracks must be high-quality audio files. Lossless formats such as WAV and AIFF are preferred, although MP3s encoded at 320kbps are also acceptable. Audio tracks ripped from YouTube clips are not acceptable for the purposes of this assessment.

- You may be required to attend a separate viva voce regarding this assignment, to elaborate on your preparation process.

- If you choose to use your own equipment for the performance, you are responsible for ensuring that your hardware and software are in good working order.

- IMPORTANT: Click 'Collect All and Save' before submitting your assignment. No concessions will be made if your Live Set is missing the required audio files.

## Assessment Criteria

Marks will be awarded according to the following criteria:

- Ability to apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance.
- Level of mixing techniques.
- Competence in the use of technologies.
- Creative adaptation of sound materials.
- Quality of self-assessment.

## Submission Instructions

The Live Performances will take place after the mid-semester break. The schedule will be available on iLearn by 5pm Friday 9 September. By 5pm on the day prior to your performance, you must upload a folder to the MMCCS server. The folder must include:

- the final version of your Ableton Live set
- a self-evaluation sheet (available on iLearn, consisting of 500-600 words)
- a Set Tracklist (guidelines available on iLearn).

The folder should be named as follows: [Surname - ID number - Performance - Week X]

Example:

**Smith - 44443333 - Performance - Week 10**

# Extensions and Late Penalties

No extensions can be granted without a Disruption to Studies application. If you experience serious and unavoidable disruption, please submit a Disruption to Studies application immediately and contact Adrian Renzo to arrange a new assessment date. (Please see the 'Disruption to Studies' policy: http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html).

Students who fail to attend their allotted performance time (without submitting a Disruption to Studies application) may be given an opportunity to perform at a later date. In such cases, the standard late penalty of 10% of the total possible mark *per day* will apply.

Please note: it is your responsibility to keep at least three copies of your work in different locations (e.g. an external hard drive, your own computer, and a USB flash drive). The hard drives of computers in the lab can be erased at any time, so these computers should not be used as back-up storage. No extensions will be granted in the event that you fail to back-up your work and inadvertently lose data.


On successful completion you will be able to:
- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance
- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection
- Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques
- Use mixing technologies
- Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques

# Delivery and Resources

## Delivery Mode

This unit consists of online lectures and on-campus tutorials.

## Class Times

Classes take place in Y3A-223. For more details please see the MQ Timetables website.

http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au

## Essential Readings

Essential readings will be listed on iLearn and will be available through the library's MultiSearch function, or will be freely available through online journals.

## Required Technology

Ableton Live 9 is available for student use on all computers in the lab. (No external licences are available for students.) You may use the lab to work on your assignments at any time that

no class is being held in the room. The lab is open from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday. Please see MQ Timetables to check when the lab is free.

http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au

You will need to supply your own headphones for this course. The headphones do not need to be premium-grade DJ headphones, but they do need to cover your ears and block out a reasonable amount of noise. (The earbuds supplied with iPhones will not be suitable for performing live.) You will need to supply your own data storage hardware. It is expected that you will regularly make three copies of your work on your own external hard drives, computers, and/or USB flash drives.

## Hardware and Software Compatability

It is students' responsibility to ensure that any work undertaken outside of the MMCCS is fully functional within and compatible with the Mac version of Ableton Live currently installed on the computers in the MMCCS labs. Additional VST instruments and effects not native to Ableton Live should not be used in submitted assignments unless you are also providing the hardware on which such instruments will run.

# Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

**New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016** http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html

Grade Appeal Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

## Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

## Additional Information

MMCCS website: https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/ department_of_media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application: http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/ download/?id=167914

Information is correct at the time of publication.

# Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

# Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

# Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

# IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/ offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

# Graduate Capabilities

## Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance
- Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques
- Use mixing technologies
- Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques

### Assessment tasks

- Mix Analysis
- Peer assessment
- Live Performance

## Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance
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### Assessment tasks

- Mix Analysis
- Peer assessment

• Live Performance

# Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

• Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance

• Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection

• Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques

• Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques

## Assessment tasks

• Mix Analysis

• Peer assessment

• Live Performance

# Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

• Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection

• Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques

• Use mixing technologies

## Assessment tasks

• Mix Analysis

• Peer assessment

• Live Performance

# Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection
- Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques

## Assessment tasks

- Mix Analysis
- Peer assessment
- Live Performance