

Conservatorium van Amsterdam

Bachelor in Music  
Department of **Pop Music**

Study Guide 2020-2021  
*Part 1: Programme Description*

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## Studying pop music at the CvA

The pop music programme at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam is open to talented, young musicians with a passion for creating pop music. It is a relatively new course, and over ninety per cent of its student body has so far consisted of Dutch students, ensuring deep roots in the musical life of the Netherlands.

The pop music degree programme provides a learning environment in which students are challenged to develop into young professionals who can participate in the professional world of pop music as enterprising artists as soon as they graduate. To that end, they learn to create, perform, produce and effectively present their work. We feel students should be introduced to all these facets so that they get a clear idea of the entire process, in addition to their specialist area. After graduating, lifelong learning in their field is a natural process.

Besides presenting to them all the ins and outs of the world of pop music, the pop music degree programme also represents a four-year-long haven in which students can work on autonomous concepts and acquire solid knowledge and skills. The market mechanisms of a small country like the Netherlands can often interfere with the urge to experiment which can lead to new developments. Finding one's own identity and expressivity takes time.

In addition to disseminating knowledge, issues like making conscious choices and developing taste in order to arrive at a powerful, exciting statement are addressed in the classes. Industry-related concessions can always be made outside the course or after graduation.

### **Course details**

Study load: 240 ECTS

Length of study: 4 years (full-time)

Languages of instruction: Dutch and English

CROHO code: 34739 (B Muziek)

Degree: Bachelor of Music

## Curriculum

The Bachelor's Degree in Music consists of one propaedeutic year (the first academic year) and a main phase (comprising the second, third and fourth years). The propaedeutic year is introductory and selective in nature, and concludes with a propaedeutic examination. During the main phase (from the second to the fourth year), examinations for all required subjects are given once a year. The entire programme concludes with a final examination.

The distinction between the propaedeutic and the main phase is important because of a possibility of a "negative binding advice" (BSA) recommending that a student discontinue his or her studies after the first year if the results are unsatisfactory. The pop music curriculum is broken down into two parts: the lower level (years 1 and 2) and the upper level (years 3 and 4). This prospectus will elaborate on that structure in greater detail.

### **Coordination of the curriculum: ICEO**

Upon graduation from the course, you should be able to play, write and produce music. You will have acquired conceptual and creative skills and a great deal of self-awareness and self-knowledge. You will have acquired good organizational skills and to articulate content effectively in order to share the knowledge you have gained.

Thanks to our contacts in the world of broadcasting, at the studios, in the music industry and with new media, we can help students establish the contacts they need. Additionally, a special set of courses prepares students for the business aspects of the music industry.

To provide broad preparation for the professional world, the curriculum is organized in accordance with four pillars: ICEO. This stands for:

- instrument
- creativity
- education
- organization

The four pillars support each talent and focal point, yet also offer scope for specialization. However, the professional world of pop music is such that all four should be developed to a certain extent to ensure that the graduate can stand on solid ground.

*Instrument:* Learning to master one's instrument so that students can effectively implement their ideas and those of others, ensuring they have the proper tone and emotional expressivity while maintaining an overview of the arrangement as a whole.

*Creativity:* Being able to use one's creativity in a practical setting: writing songs, producing, arranging, improvising and developing one's own musical material. This ensures that a broad interest in experimentation and in finding one's own core are developed.

*Education:* Students must be able to express their own musical ideas methodically, since by doing so, they will learn to communicate and convey their own knowledge. A key concept is dissemination, in the broadest sense of the word, from one-to-one lessons to band coaching and from production to leading your band with skill. In short, it is about the development of an effective narrative for all dissemination of knowledge transfer in the professional world.

*Organization:* Organizational and business skills: by learning to plan and organize effectively, students ensure that artistic ideas have a real chance of success; they also manage their available time and capacities in the best possible way.

All the pillars are closely interconnected and support one another. Mastering the instrument increases creativity, and vice versa: creative ideas influence how the player approaches the instrument. Further, creativity is important when it comes to deepening one's insight into methodology and working method, in addition to staying fresh. Teaching also deepens one's approach to the instrument. Organizing one's career effectively has a decisive influence on all the other pillars.

### Description of the curriculum

Year	Principal subject	EC	Bands and Projects	EC	Theory subjects	EC	DOK	EC	'Free space'	EC
I	Principal subject individ. Group lesson I Group lesson II Production & Studio	8 4 4 1	Freestyle band Style band	6 6	Solfège I HAP I GTS I AML Comp. Lab I MT I Pop history I	3 3 6 4 4 4 3	DOK I Career Clinic	3 1		
60		17		12		27		4		x
II	Principal subject individ. Group lesson I Group lesson II Production & Studio	8 3 3 2	Freestyle band Style band	6 6	Solfège II HAP II GTS II KTB I Comp. Lab II MT III Pop history II	3 3 6 4 4 4 3	Educational studies Methodology & internship	2 2		
60		16		12		27		5		x
III	Principal subject individ. Group lesson I Group lesson II Studio Lab ICO	15 3 3 3	Advanced Style Lab I Advanced Style Lab II	6 6	KTB II Elective I	4 4	Methodology & Internship DOK III	3 1 8	Student's choice	
60		24		12	Electives	8		12		4
IV	Principal subject individ. Studio Lab ICO	20 12	Advanced Style Lab	6	Elective II Elective III	4 4	DOK IV	8	Student's choice	
60		32		6		8		8		6

The curriculum set by the Pop music Department is clearly broken down into two parts: the starting level (years 1 and 2) and the upper level (years 3 and 4), both with a different approach. The subjects can be divided into five types: principal subject and subsidiary subjects relating to the

principal subject; bands and projects; theory subjects; pedagogical subjects and entrepreneurial subjects (DOK); and ‘free space’.

#### *Principal subject and related subsidiary subjects, bands and projects*

Five principal subjects are offered as part of the pop music course: voice, guitar, bass guitar, drums and keyboards. A principal subject consists of both one-to-one and group lessons. In addition, students are given ample opportunity to gain experience in a number of ensembles.

#### *Theory subjects*

The selection of theory courses consists of General Theory Training, Solfège, Harmony at the Piano (HAP), Keys I and Keys II, History of Pop music, Art: Language and Image, General Music Theory, Composition Lab and Music Technology.

The aim of these auxiliary subjects is to develop students’ inner ear and musical perception jointly, and to shed light on the professional music world from different perspectives.

#### *DOK programme: pedagogical and entrepreneurial subjects*

Holders of a Bachelor’s Degree in Music from the CvA have earned the qualification to teach at a music school or arts centre. The pedagogical subjects on offer involve the methodology of the student’s own instrument, education and an internship. Foundations are built which will allow students to set up their own private teaching studios and to work in music education in the broadest sense. They are also taught how to prepare themselves for organizational and business aspects of the professional world. To that end, a special curriculum called the Enterprising Artist (known in Dutch as *De Ondernemende Kunstenaar*, or DOK). Specialist guest teachers are enlisted to teach some of the classes. The programme is supported by the [www.beroepkunstenaar.nl](http://www.beroepkunstenaar.nl) website, developed in collaboration with the various departments of AHK. By developing their profile and final project, students largely decide for themselves how they shape the DOK programme. Key points include developing a project plan, setting up a one-person business in the arts and organizing and shaping the final examination festivals.

#### *‘Free space’*

A portion of the curriculum is made up of electives, giving students the opportunity to focus more on things like bands, world music, improvisation, live electronics, studio technique and subsidiary instruments related to the principal subject. Deeper theoretical or educational study is also an option.

## Starting level

Year	Principal subject	EC	Bands and Projects	EC	Theory subjects	EC	DOK	EC	'Free space'	EC
I	Principal subject individ. Group lesson I Group lesson II Production & Studio	8 4 4 1	Freestyle band Style band	6 6	Solfège I HAP I GTS I AML Comp. Lab I MT I Pop history I	3 3 6 4 4 4 3	DOK I Career Clinic	3 1		
60		17		12		27		4		X
II	Principal subject individ. Group lesson I Group lesson II Production & Studio	8 3 3 2	Freestyle band Style band	6 6	Solfège II HAP II GTS II KTB I Comp. Lab II MT III Pop history II	3 3 6 4 4 4 3	Educational studies Methodology & internship	2 2		
60		16		12		27		5		X

In the first two years, students follow a rigorous curriculum involving many hours of instruction (for the hours of instruction per course, see the course descriptions at the end of this prospectus). In addition to the principal subject, there are classes in many different groups and configurations, and the students work on outputs. In this phase, the principal subject teacher is the first point of contact for any questions and issues influencing the study. The principal study teacher also monitors how students are functioning in class and how the material is applied in practical terms.

### *Performances*

Each unit is concluded with two examination weeks for all subjects. The results of the style and freestyle bands in units 1 and 2 and the free periods in unit 3 are presented at various pop venues in the city. All performances are assessed by the teachers in accordance with the A-MACK system (see A-MACK system elsewhere in this prospectus).

### *Assessments*

The last week of each unit is the evaluation week. Examinations and performances are discussed for each student in the teacher meetings. Based on their performance in the instrumental principal subject, on examinations and in band presentations, students receive feedback from their teachers and band coaches on their development in order to make course corrections to their personal process.

### *Binding recommendation that a student discontinue his or her studies*

Admission to the pop music degree course is effected in accordance with a rigorous selection procedure. However, sometimes things can take an unexpected turn. Should a student's performance in the propaedeutic year be deemed unsatisfactory, a *binding recommendation that the student discontinue his or her studies* may be issued. Such students may no longer continue their studies in the pop music degree programme or in another bachelor's degree in music at the CvA. The criteria for a binding recommendation are the following: the student must have earned all credits for the core subjects. The core subjects consist of all first-year courses for the main subject and bands and projects, plus Keys I, Solfège I, Keys II, Harmony at the Piano I and General Theory

Training I. The student must have earned at least 70% of the credits for the additional theoretical subjects; the student must have earned at least 50% of the credits for introductory or auxiliary subjects. A *binding recommendation that a student discontinue his or her studies* may also be given to a student who has yet to complete the propaedeutic year after two years of study. The Teaching and Examination Regulations outline in greater detail the procedural rules concerning the recommendation.

## Upper level

Year	Principal subject	EC	Bands and Projects	EC	Theory subjects	EC	DOK	EC	'Free space'	EC
III	Principal subject individ. Group lesson I Group lesson II Studio Lab ICO	15 3 3 3	Advanced Style Lab I Advanced Style Lab II	6 6	KTB II Elective I	4 4	Methodology and Internship DOK III	3 1 8	Student's choice	
60		24		12	Electives	8		12		4
IV	Principal subject individ. Studio Lab ICO	20 12	Advanced Style Lab	6	Elective II Elective III	4 4	DOK IV	8	Student's choice	
60		32		6		8		8		6

In the last two years, students are given more individual guidance in their autonomous motivation and development, and lay the foundations for setting up a healthy one-person business in the music industry reflecting their talents and strengths, supporting the principle of the four pillars, thereby enabling the graduate to enter the pop music market as a strong player.

### *Guest lectures and career clinics*

Various guests from the professional world are regularly invited to give workshops. The Career Clinics give students a glimpse into the day-to-day activities and career choices of these professionals. Guests have backgrounds as well-known musicians, producers and songwriters, while others have an organizational or business profile.

### *Performances*

Each unit is concluded with two examination weeks for all subjects. The results of the style and freestyle bands in units 1 and 2 and the free periods in unit 3 are presented at various pop venues in the city. All performances are assessed by the teachers in accordance with the A-MACK system (see A-MACK system elsewhere in this prospectus).

### *Assessment*

The last week of each unit is the evaluation week. The teachers discuss examinations and performances with the students. Based on their performance in the instrumental principal subject, on examinations and in band presentations, students receive feedback on their development in order to make course corrections to their personal process.

### *Final presentation*

Students prepare individually for the final presentation, developing a clear profile which strikes a balance between the four ICEO pillars and working, as it were, towards their career.

Students are guided by a mentor during the last two years who ensures the broad-based nature of the study plan and keeps in touch with all relevant teachers.

During the final presentation, students are assessed on

- the musical performance (Instruments)
- the creative concept (Creativity)
- their ability to communicate methodological ideas clearly (Education)
- organizational/business planning (Organization)

### *Mentoring*

In the last two years, the student shifts his or her focus to preparing for the final examination and moving into the professional world as a one-person business in the arts sector. The DOK subjects (*De Ondernemende Kunstenaar*) support this process. It is during the final examination that students present their skills and artistic ideas to the outside world. This process is supported by a mentor who is assigned to the student by agreement in years 3 and 4. The mentor should be able to ask the right questions, monitor the process and refer the student to information relevant to his or her development. It is also important that the mentor should be well versed in the student's style area. The mentor communicates using the A-MACK monitoring system with the department head, organization and principal study teacher regarding the student's progress and notifies the relevant teachers of any deficiencies in a particular area. These are discussed in detail during the teacher meetings in respect of each student.

### *Electives and 'free space'*

Students may choose various 'free space' electives in line with the direction they wish to pursue. The duration of an elective course varies from three to six months, and the number of credits can also vary per elective. The mentor can advise the student on making a logical choice.

In the last two years, students choose at least three theory electives in addition to the ASL bands to support them as they advance towards the final examination.

The pop music upper-level electives programme focuses on

1. theory training and concept development
2. contemporary arts education
3. developing a reflective, inquisitive and professional attitude
4. breaking new ground, topicality, interdisciplinarity and topicality as regards the arts

In the last two years, students choose part of their curriculum from the following:

- at least three Advanced Style Labs for 6 credits
- at least three theory electives for 4 credits
- 'free space' electives for 10 credits.

This means that 40 of the 120 credits are reserved for electives, bands and 'free space'. These electives help students to shape their own personal development.

### *A-MACK assessment*

Students are also assessed in accordance with the four ICEO pillars in the last two years:

- instrument
- creativity
- education
- organization

Students hone their organizational skills by means of the DOK courses and real-world professional management skills. The students' artistic projects are assessed on a practical basis by a selection of guest teachers and a process involving six meetings with a coach active in the professional world. Topics addressed are concept, organization and publicity.

### *Semesters*

In contrast to the trimester structure of the first and second years, the third and fourth years are divided into semesters. There are two performances each year, and students are assessed using the A-MACK system twice a year.

### *Final examination*

Prior to graduation, students perform with three graduation candidates an evening-long programme at a venue in the city or at the CvA. Each candidate is expected to perform for approximately one hour of the programme. Students use this concert to show which projects and artistic ideas they intend to focus on in their careers. Many candidates will have already made great strides in this direction in the final year of their training. The three candidates are expected to prepare thoroughly for the evening, developing an overall concept. They are responsible for quality programming, the overall organization and promotion. This evening, each candidate will also present a professional-level recording with artwork and featuring at least five songs from their most important artistic project.

The final examination committee consists of five teachers from the Pop music Department with different instrumental backgrounds – if, for instance, a candidate takes an examination for bass guitar, he or she will be assessed by two bass guitar teachers and three other teachers (instrumental and/or production). One of the teachers is the principal study teacher.

The result is expressed in two marks: one assessing his or her competence in the instrumental component, the second relating to the creative component in which the musical concepts presented are assessed in the broadest sense of the word. These two marks represent a final assessment in respect of two of the four ICEO pillars. The other two pillars are assessed at a time other than the final examination and must be satisfactory in order for the student to graduate. Education is assessed on the basis of internships and projects; organization is closely interconnected with the student's preparation leading up to the final examination which begins in the third year as part of

the DOK programme when students start drafting their project plan. The further development of both the content and organizational components of the examination is closely monitored throughout the course.

Finally, students receive a final assessment with their A-MACK report outlining recommendations for the future and the start of their career.

So far, final examinations have been held in the smaller halls at Paradiso and De Melkweg, Pakhuis Wilhelmina, Pakhuis Willem de Zwijger, De Arena (sleep-in), OT301, OCCII, PLEK, Tolhuistuin and various theatres. The evenings are often well catered and attract many audience members, including fellow students, friends and family, as well as other guests from the professional circuit.

## Teachers

The courses offered by the Pop music Department are given by musicians of the highest calibre active in the Dutch pop music scene. All the teachers are big names or key figures in their field and are actively involved in creating music productions and performances of the highest professional calibre. Their expertise covers a variety of genres and facets in terms of performance and production, guaranteeing that the course can function in a genre-free context to promote new developments and pass on expertise. Among them, the teachers have a network which encompasses the entire dance and pop industry both in and outside the Netherlands.

The upper-level mentoring system ensures a link between knowledge and experience. Generally, upper-level pop students already lead semi-professional lives and can ask teachers for career advice. Even after graduation, students and teachers maintain close contact.

### Permanent teachers in each section

#### *Vocal section*

Bodhi Sykora	voice, methodology
Moniek Bakker	voice
Jolien Grünberg	voice
Stanly Clementina	voice
Tom Tukker	voice, songwriting

#### *Guitar section*

Jack Pisters	guitar, DOK, department head
René van Barneveld	guitar, band coach, mentor
Marcel Singor	guitar, band coach, mentor
Arnold van Dongen	guitar, band coach, mentor
Martijn van Agt	guitar

#### *Bass section*

Manuel Hugas	bass
Ivo Severijns	bass
Lene te Voortwis	bass
Arto Boyadjian	bass, band coach, mentor
Jaimie van Hek	bass methodology, band coach

#### *Drum section*

Oscar Kraal	drums, band coach
Eric Hoeke	drums
Ruben van Roon	drums
Joost Kroon	drums

### *Keyboards section*

Nico Brandsen	keyboards, band coach, mentor
Wiboud Burkens	keyboards, mentor
Joost v.d. Broek	keyboards, mentor
Robin van Vliet	band coach, mentor
Martin v.d. Oetelaar	synths and programming

### *Studio*

Atti Bauw  
Hans Weekhout  
Bram Bol  
Pepijn Stutterheim  
Maurice Bom

### *Theory and composition*

Jack Pisters	Composition
Marnix Dorrestein	Composition
Tessa Rose Jackson	Composition
Arto Boyadjian	Composition
Roeland Sherff	General Theory Training, HAP I
Eran Har Even	Solfège
Annelotte Coster	HAP II
Clause Toft	World rhythm
Flip v.d. Ende	History of Pop music
Blanka Pesja	KTB, Lyric Lab, mentor

### *DOK*

Jack Pisters	DOK III and IV
Meindert Bussink	DOK III and IV
René Brijker	Methodology
William Penn	Marketing Media

### **Guest teachers**

In addition to the permanent team of specialists, nearly every week a leading guest lecturer from the Dutch or international pop world gives students a glimpse behind the scenes of his or her life as an artist, inspiring students in their outputs and in the mastery of their instrument. These guests also provide insight into business concepts and answer questions about their careers.

### **Network**

The Pop music Programme maintains contact with various halls and programmers for performances, facilities and feedback. Each year, the programme produces high-quality pop music on forty evenings in the city. Many of these performances feature original compositions.

The programme also maintains close contact with a network of private schools, pop initiatives and arts centres actively engaging with pop music. Not only do we scout young talent and encourage high-quality education, but many of our students also find work as teachers and coaches at these institutions. A blend of performance, composition, dissemination and organizational framework results in a new type of music teacher who has acquired all the necessary competencies; consequently, these institutions are keen to fill vacancies by employing our former students. The programme offers students frequent opportunities to work as part of a group, so they are often right at home as band coaches or workshop leaders. As a result, our alumni provide a welcome addition to the market of pop music education and cultural courses.

The Pop music Programme maintains regular contact with a number of senior secondary vocational education schools (MBO schools) and participates in a consultation group aimed at helping young people move on to the next phase of their academic career. Here, too, current and former students have been appointed as teachers, and a number of promising students have begun their higher professional training here in the last two years.

In addition to the teacher network, we work with Paradiso, De Melkweg and Mojo, and many artists enjoy teaching our students in sessions. Highlights include Gary Lucas (Captain Beefheart/Jeff Buckley), Gerry Leonard, (David Bowie and Rufus Wainwright), Kees de Koning (owner of the hip-hop label Top Notch), Jan Smeets (of Pinkpop), Triggerfinger, Adrian Belew, Andy Summers (of The Police), and a visit made by Kraftwerk's Karl Bartos.