



POINT BLANK

MUSIC SCHOOL



POINT BLANK MUSIC SCHOOL

Point Blank: An Introduction



In partnership with

**Middlesex
University
London**



WWW.POINTBLANKLONDON.COM

Introduction

"If you're serious about your music, Point Blank is the place to be.."

Pete Tong MBE, internationally renowned BBC Radio One DJ/broadcaster and global music industry figure for over 30 years.

If you are thinking about studying at Point Blank, then no doubt you will be keen to know who we are, what we do and what you get out of studying with us. The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with key information about Point Blank Music School and answer any initial questions you may have.

What is Point Blank?

Established in 1994, Point Blank started out as a commercial recording studio before evolving into a hands-on teaching facility, and later becoming the world's "Best Electronic Music School" as voted by the readers of DJ Mag. The School offers bespoke tuition from London, Los Angeles and online with personalised teaching to intimate classes. Our goal has always been to harness and demonstrate the creative process of making music at the highest level.

We select outstanding talent from the music industry as instructors, training them to teach our courses in a consistent manner across all subjects. The students study in state-of-the-art studios on the latest equipment thus creating a perfect learning environment. The courses are accredited with internationally recognised academic qualifications and since we started sharing the music industry's secrets, over 50,000 students worldwide have chosen Point Blank as the best place to study music production, sound engineering, music business, singing, radio production and DJ skills.

Student Success

We're proud to say that 85% of our Diploma graduates have gone on to gain successful employment in the industry within the first year of completing their studies. Our students have also achieved No.1 success in the UK and International singles charts as well as across music platforms such as Beatport and Juno Download. Our graduates include Leona Lewis, Goldie, Aluna Francis from No.1 act AlunaGeorge (see opposite), Radio One DJ and Channel 4 presenter Gemma Cairney, Radio One DJ Edith Bowman, Interscope Records A&R Dave Rene and other successful industry figures. By studying at Point Blank, students join our network of music producers from all over the world. You can see our ever-growing list of student successes online.

Student Opportunities

We have an excellent network and maintain an active dialogue with employers in the industry to give our students and alumni the best opportunities. Our strong industry connections ensure that unique internships, studio placements and competitions generally become available on a weekly basis. From these, we have had many graduates who have gone on to work at studios including Abbey Road, become in-house sound engineers for labels such as Mute Records and find work at radio stations such as Radio One and KISS FM.

As part of the Point Blank experience, we offer students at the London school free music career advice sessions with professional music consultant Kwame Kwaten of Ferocious Talent Management. Kwame has steered the careers of many successful artists including Dido, Rumer and Laura Mvula as well as scoring No.1 hits himself as a producer (Shola Ama) and artist (D:Influence). Kwame's feedback and advice is an invaluable tool for our students.

You can find more information on these types of opportunities on our daily digital magazine Point Blank Plus.

plus.pointblanklondon.com



FEATURED
STUDENTS
#1

AlunaGeorge

Aluna Francis is one half of top UK duo AlunaGeorge. She studied music production at Point Blank and then took off to massive chart success with "You Know You Like It" to NME's Best Track of the year and UK No.1 hit "White Noise" which she performed live at the Brit Awards with Disclosure. Aluna's talent has taken her a long way – we are proud she studied her art with Point Blank.

Educational Approval

Point Blank is accredited by several important educational and regulatory bodies. All of our London and online Diploma courses are accredited by either Pearson/Edexcel or Middlesex University and students receive an internationally recognised qualification upon successful completion of their course. The most comprehensive course we offer in London is worth the equivalent of 3 "A" levels (120-420 UCAS points), making our courses an ideal progression route to university or a job in the industry (see Featured Course for more information). The school also undergoes regular inspection by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), both of which are government approved bodies.

Every year we have achieved top marks upon inspection: you can view the full reports on our website. You can rest assured you are receiving a top class education.

"The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent."

Independent Schools Inspectorate, 2015

"The review team has confidence in Point Blank Ltd's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body and organisation."

Quality Assurance Agency, 2014

edexcel
Approved Centre



Point Blank Music College
Certification N°. 245
educationaloversight.co.uk/245
Educational Oversight 2015

QAA Reviewed
Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education



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FEATURED STUDENTS #2

PAULA FAIRFIELD

Paula Fairfield is an award winning Sound Designer who has worked on a host of movies and TV shows including *Game of Thrones*, *Lost*, *Sin City*, *Tropic Thunder*, *Predators* and many others. We spoke to Paula about her work and what prompted her to study music production online at Point Blank.



Please introduce yourself. What is your name and where are you from?

My Name is Paula Fairfield. I am originally from Canada but have lived in Los Angeles for 11 years.

Can you tell us a little about your job?

I am a supervising sound editor and designer for feature film and TV. I have been working in the commercial industry for 15 years and before that I ran a media center for artists in Canada, worked as a picture and sound editor for artists and also made my own multi-media based video, film and audio works.

How did you get started in this line of work? Is this what you always wanted to do?

I went to the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, where I concentrated on video,

audio and photographic art. One summer I got an apprenticeship at the National Film Board of Canada and worked as an assistant to an award-winning picture and sound editor. At that time, film was still edited on magnetic tape stock, moviolas and Kems. As I waited to cut edited magnetic tape pieces of sound into prepped tracks, I watched in awe at the sound editing my boss was doing. I had no idea this was how sound for movies was done. So when you ask "Is this what you always wanted to do" the answer is "No. I didn't know this job existed". At the risk of sounding corny, the process of adding sounds to image was so magical and I got completely hooked.

What do you like most about your job? And what's the hardest part?

I love designing sounds. I love breaking a sonic event down conceptually into its ti-

niest parts and then building it. I get a rush every time I watch a completed sequence against picture. It is so much fun and I get paid to do it. What's not to love? The hardest part is dealing with tight budgets and deadlines. Sound is pretty much the last process in filmmaking and by the time we get the project, everyone has run out of money and time. Consider what contribution sound makes to the movie experience and then consider that we often find ourselves fighting for 1/2% of the entire film budget (yes you read that right!!!).

What tips would you offer someone who is interested in working in this field?

Its tough right now, but I guess that can be said about all industries. Best thing is to try and build a portfolio of work and network with industry people. There are online sites

always advertising the need for low or no-pay sound for short films etc and that is a good way to get opportunities and meet people.

What prompted you to take a course with Point Blank? What appealed to you about these courses?

I have owned Ableton Live for a while and have never had the time to get into it. I tried once but because it is such a different way of thinking, it wasn't immediately apparent how to use it in the half hour I had here and there to look at it. I had some time this summer and thought it would be fun to finally learn it. Similarly, Reaktor has always eluded me as it seems like you need to be a nuclear physicist to use it. It is an interesting tool and one very well suited for design work. My main hesitations about taking courses at your school were that a) I am not a musician (though I wish

I were) and b) I work exclusively to picture. The Point Blank courses definitely put me way outside my comfort zone, and that's a good thing!

What has been the best thing about the course so far?

Surprisingly, I find myself making music and really, really enjoying it. It's very liberating. It makes me work in a totally different way. I didn't think I would enjoy it as much as I have so far - I sit down in the evening to work a little on an assignment and I look at the clock and it's 4am and have to tear myself away. I may not be brilliant at it but I am loving it. And I am learning tons of stuff every day.

What are the advantages in taking an online music course?

For me it's always a time thing. Especially in this industry with multiple clients changing their minds and schedules all the time, it's hard to plan anything. With an online course, I can sit down when I have a minute and poke away at a lesson and then get back to my work. It's fantastic!

Thanks Paula! See you soon...



Featured Course: Music Production & Sound Engineering Master Diploma

The Music Production and Sound Engineering Master Diploma is the pinnacle of what Point Blank offers and gives students a 360°-view of their options in the music business. It's been carefully developed by music industry professionals who have worked with some of the biggest artists in the world such as U2 and Massive Attack and is worth the equivalent of 3 "A" levels (120-420 UCAS points). Upon successful completion, students obtain an Edexcel BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Music Technology alongside their Point Blank Diploma making the course an ideal progression route to university or a job in the industry.

Delivering four full practical lecture days per week, the Master Diploma is the perfect launching pad to a successful career in the music industry.

To see the full range of all our courses please visit pointblanklondon.com

Modules Included

Term 1

- **Intro to Music Production**
- **Music Composition**
- **Music Business**
- **Complete DJ**

Term 2

- **Sound Design**
- **Sound Engineering**
- **Music Business - Intermediate**
- **Live Sound**

Term 3

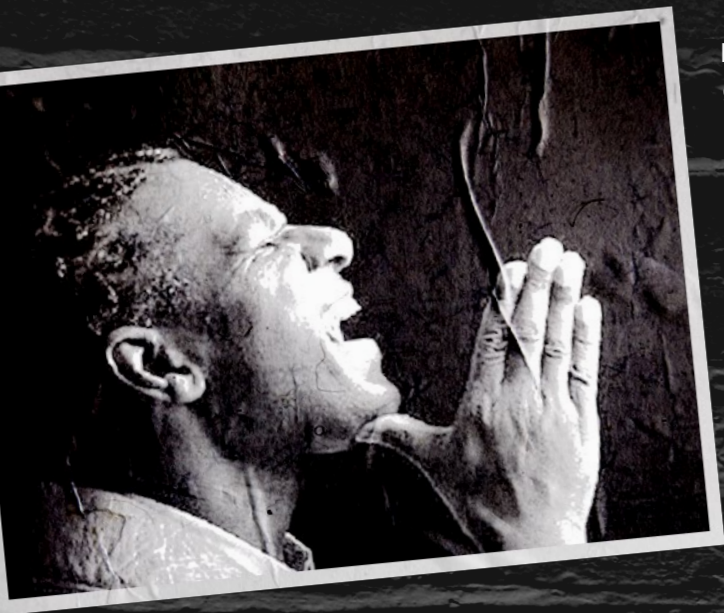
- **Art of Mixing**
- **Music Industry Project**
- **Music Business – Industry Project**
- **Mastering**

Classes

We teach in small class sizes and students have their own production workstation with the latest software and hardware. Students get plenty of 1-2-1 time with their instructor and outside of lectures, they get unlimited access to our state-of-the-art studios to practise what they have learned in class and collaborate with other students. The studios are open Mon-Fri from 10am-11:00pm and Sat-Sun 10am-7:30pm.

Expert Instructors

Our courses are taught by music industry professionals whom we select for their combination of talent, personality, experience and tangible success in their field. Our instructors have long lists of credits and have collaborated with some of the biggest artists in the world including Pharrell Williams, Bjork, Swedish House Mafia and Chemical Brothers. You can see the full list of Expert Instructors on our website at pointblanklondon.com. Please get to know one of our team members by reading the article on the following pages.



FEATURED
INSTRUCTOR

PHIL RAMOCON

Phil Ramocon has racked up some impressive accolades in his 25 years in the music industry. His enthusiasm and passion for all genres of music has lead him to work with Gregory Isaacs, Neneh Cherry, Jimmy Cliff, Marianne Faithful and even Bob Marley to name a few!

In this interview, our Grammy award-winning Music Composition instructor spills the beans on his legendary career...

How did you originally get into songwriting and music, and what made you decide it was something you should follow as a career?

I got into Songwriting through playing piano at school. People were telling me it sounded pretty good until one of the teachers said I should get some proper lessons. They sent me to a local teacher in Stamford Hill and I loved it. I kept doing my grades and winning competitions before getting a scholarship to study properly. I thought I'd take it really seriously and – to everyone's amazement – got a place at Dartington Hall in Devon. From there I got exposed to things I hadn't known about before, lots of classical music.

The Amadeus Quartet and famous classical people go down there and give lessons and masterclasses. I kind of got obsessed and attended them all and got exposed to lots of different forms of composition, concertos, symphonies so wrote a lot of that stuff.

There was also a big electronics department there that had a massive Modular

synth. I got fascinated with all the wires etc. as I never knew about anything like that. So that was one of the benefits about going to that place, getting exposure to early electronic music.

I met someone at college who had a contact at Island Records, the record company for Jimmy Cliff, Bob Marley, Gregory Isaacs and rock bands like "Free". I went down to London to audition for Island and they must have liked the way I played. While I was still at college I was playing on a Bob Marley record!

I just played what I knew which was classical pieces and they all got excited about it. At the time I didn't really appreciate who I was playing for...



Bob Marley

I then came across a guy called Steve Winwood who was in a band called Traffic. Through him I worked with the sax player where I met Jimmy Cliff and various other musicians that were signed to Island Records.



Steve Winwood

stuff on the radio knowing I'd played on it.

I did an audition for a guy called Rico Rodriguez who was a jazz trombonist back in the early 60s and he's a very revered older statesman of ska music and I got into his band. I was the youngest guy there. They told me their band was going to be supporting Bob Marley on the European leg of his Exodus tour 1978 and asked if I wanted to do it.

That tour was the first time I came across Bob in person and it was when he was in his peak. Bob heard me play every night with Rico and I started chatting to him. We shared the same outlook on life as a spiritual journey with a moral purpose. After the tour ended I would often get the call to work with him in the studio whenever he was in London.

It was definitely an honour to watch him work close up, talk with him and be a part of his creative process.

As soon as I left college I was playing with these guys and they got excited because I could read classical music. They asked me to write brass and string arrangements and it was really nice to hear this

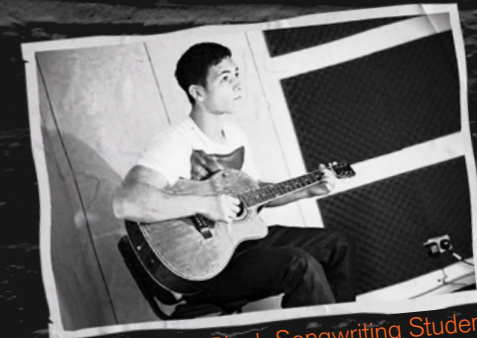
After having a number of commercial and critical successes with songwriting & production, (gaining a number of Grammy nominations in the process), how did you eventually make the leap from being the writer, full-time, to teaching others how to write for themselves?

A long time ago I was asked to deputise a teaching job at South Thames college and they were running a small department in music production. My job was to teach Pro Tools as it was then and piano. I was really inspired by my students as the gear that we had then was really basic but they made the best of it. Some of the things they were playing was unbelievable. Pretty much my whole class were the founding members of So Solid Crew who had all come from the church. They were really enthusiastic and hungry for the knowledge and any little thing they could get from me and the other tutors.

Apart from learning from a hugely experienced songwriter and mentor like yourself; what other benefits to young musicians do you see coming from taking music courses such as those at Point Blank?

This is important in contemporary music where it's all about the collaborative process. Also, in a college environment you get to meet loads of people that have similar music interests and tastes.

When I was studying music there weren't many places where you could learn to produce music. It was more a case of reading the manuals and learning by making a lot of mistakes. At Point Blank you get hands on experience and have people who can show you tips that you wouldn't see in a manual or text book.



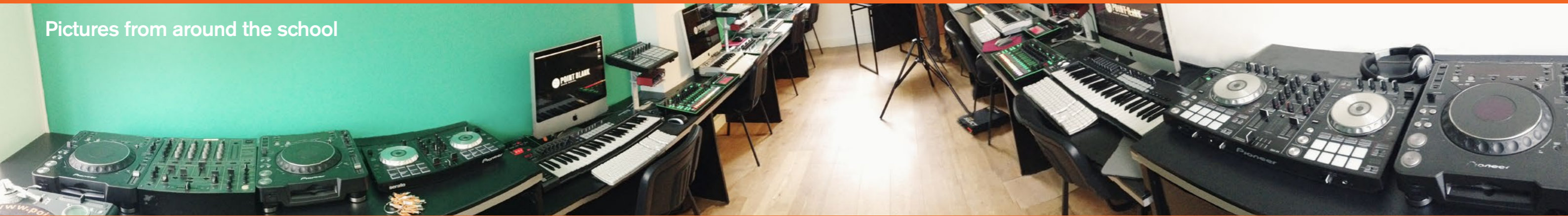
Point Blank Songwriting Student

Everybody has got the chance to be up there with the very best, if you keep working, keep developing and try different things and experiment by mixing genres. Personally I like catchy things so my advice to you is just make it catchy!

To read the full interview please go to our digital magazine at plus.pointblanklondon.com and search "Phil Ramocon".



Pictures from around the school





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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH A COURSE ADVISOR:

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