

CHEM RECORDING

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'ENGINEERING & PRODUCTION IN PRACTICE'

FEBRUARY 2020 – JUNE 2020

CHEM19 Recording Studios, based in Blantyre, just outside Glasgow, is proud to announce the launch of another round of SoundLAB; its innovative learning opportunity for individuals of ages 18-30 who are interested in learning about the disciplines of engineering and production in a hands-on, commercial studio environment.

Chem19 is one of Scotland's best-established recording studios, created as a sister company to Glasgow's independent record company **Chemikal Underground** in 1997. The studio has seen many of Scotland's most influential artists pass through its doors over the past 20 years from Mogwai to Franz Ferdinand, and from Twilight Sad to Calvin Harris.

The course will take the form of approx 18, 4-hour teaching sessions taught over 5 months, **one every week**. Two groups of 6 students will be taught by a selection of Chem19's own experienced engineers/producers in one of our 2 commercial studios.

A brief description of the course content can be found overleaf. The emphasis of the course is on engineering and production in a practical and commercial environment and as such takes the form of workshops rather than lectures.

We have found this course to be of interest to a great many individuals in the fields of sound engineering, production and music in general, whether already studying or having studied at further or higher education levels, or whether having a more practical, hands-on experience of the disciplines. It is **not** necessary to have any qualification in the field – some basic knowledge and practical experience is all you require to be eligible to apply. We aim to present each student with the opportunity to learn, or refresh their existing knowledge about the basic theories and principles, their practical application and ultimately their roles as applied in an actual recording session. A recording session will be carried out by the students, under supervision, towards the end of the course. Successful completion of the course will result in receipt of a completion certificate. Good attendance will be necessary in order to receive a completion certificate.

COURSE FEES

The course is presented with grant support from **Creative Scotland and The National Lottery** and as such the cost for the delivery of the course from February 2020 is heavily subsidised, presenting a great opportunity to those students interested in taking part. **There is no fee to take part in SoundLAB 2020**, although it will be necessary to provide a quality set of reference headphones and access to a computer, more info on which can be found below.

CONTRIBUTION TO TRANSPORT COSTS

We will be making a contribution to transportation costs up to a value of £5 per student per class, subject to the fund's availability. Receipts will be necessary to claim for this support.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply you must be between 18-30 years old and resident in Scotland. There will only be 12 places available for the year and as such there will be a selection procedure in place to enable us to identify the most suitable candidates.

APPLICATIONS

If you are eligible and would like to apply please send the following to us at info@chem19.co.uk by midnight on **Friday 3rd January 2020**. We will be notifying all applicants of the outcome of our selection process by mid January. The course will begin on **Tuesday 4th February 2020**.

To apply please provide us with:

Your current CV

Answers to the following questions:

- 1. Open paragraph - please tell us a little about yourself.**
- 2. Describe your current knowledge/experience in audio engineering and/or production.**
- 3. Explain why you are interested in learning about audio engineering and production.**
- 4. Tell us what you hope to gain if you are successful in attending this course.**
- 5. Talk a little about a recording / artist / engineer / producer that has inspired you in becoming interested in the field of audio engineering and production.**

We only need a few paragraphs on each question.

Many thanks for taking an interest in this course, and if you do choose to apply we wish you the best of luck.

Chem19 Recording

SOUNDLAB: ENGINEERING & PRODUCTION IN PRACTICE

A BRIEF OUTLINE

Basic audio engineering theory & principles:

Signal flow / Gain Structure / Microphones / EQ / Compression / Reverb & Delay / Phase Relationships / Brief history of recording

Practical application of theory:

Effective use of Pro Tools / Microphone placement / Use of mixer & outboard equipment / Basic Mixing Techniques

Artistic Input & Production:

Understanding and identifying an artist's desired sound / Understanding the importance of arrangement & song structure / Learning to listen critically to a song / Recognising a good performance

2 Recording Sessions:

Managing an artist / Etiquette in the studio / Time management & planning / Problem solving / Decision making

THE PRODUCTION ELEMENT

A significant part of the SoundLAB course will be presented within the context of working with a professional songwriter on a new song; helping them develop and subsequently record that song over subsequent sessions. Each week, working with a different session musician and instrument, the student will learn about engineering through the lens of production. This will take place initially with the songwriter present, to introduce the song and develop discussions on how to arrange and record it with full input from each group of students. This process gives the student a significant degree of artistic input over the sonic decision making process, allowing for a unique learning experience. Both student groups will subsequently produce their own version of the same song providing a real world insight into the diverse results that different production choices can lead to. This hands-on approach will allow a first hand glimpse into the importance of arrangement and instrument choice when deciding how to approach recording with a production ear. Listening to the song and being able to provide critique on its constituent parts is often just as important as the recording of the instruments themselves.

A NOTE ABOUT THE RECORDING SESSIONS

The main emphasis of this course will be based on the practical requirements of a typical recording studio session in tandem with the production aspect described above. Tutors will concentrate on different principles, techniques and approaches every week whilst always maintaining a practical reference point. This will maintain focus on delivering contextualized results when the students themselves begin engineering. The students will be asked to run a basic session in the studio early on in the course as a way to identify their current abilities and skills and also to act as a marker or reference point to build their learning on. The goal for the second and final session will be for the students to track one song for a professional band and produce a rough mix in 10 hours with little or no assistance from the tutor. Students will be sorted into groups of 3 to record these sessions. These sessions will take place in weekends in June, on dates to be scheduled nearer the time.

ASSIGNMENTS

There will be regular, short practical or written assignments to keep students focused throughout the course. Students will be able to communicate with tutors and fellow students via a dedicated online group and further learning resources will also be made available online through the Chem19 website for the duration of the course.

PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Computer Access & Headphones Requirement

For the most successful learning experience it is recommended that students have access to a computer to be able to access the online group and complete assignments between sessions. Free software **Pro Tools First** will be used as the basis from which to teach the fundamentals of one of the most commonly used professional recording software packages: Pro Tools. **Pro Tools First** can be downloaded for free from the Avid website, but to maximize the learning experience it is also a requirement of the course to provide a good pair of **reference headphones** to use with the software. Please note, earphones or earbuds are not sufficient alternatives – you will need over ear headphones that insulate you from outside interference. The minimum budget for this kind of purchase (if you don't already have access to good headphones) is around £50 with the Audio Technica ATH-M series being a good place to start. The lowest price in that range starts at £45 (ATH-m20x), but there are plenty other fairly accessible models out there including those from Sennheiser e.g. HD 280 Pro (around £75), Beyerdynamic e.g. DT 250 (around £130). It's always best to visit a good local music shop and try some out before you buy.

FIELD VISITS - AYRSHIRE COLLEGE & THE GLAD CAFÉ, GLASGOW

For the first time, we will this year be delivering part of the course in different locations to improve the student experience and accelerate learning in two particular areas. The first of these visits will be to **Ayrshire College**, and in particular their Pro Tools Suite which offers multiple computer workstations and Pro Tools setups. This particular lesson will take place on a weekend afternoon around late February, and will allow students the chance to learn or refresh their existing knowledge on the professional recording software Pro Tools. On returning to Chem19 students will be able to continue their learning on Pro Tools within the more practice based workshops. We hope that this hands-on focus on software early in the course will allow students the chance to quickly get to grips with unfamiliar software, or to refresh their knowledge of software they may have only come across once or twice. While audio recording software (often referred to as a Digital Audio Workstation or DAW) is one of the main tools used in home recording, it makes up only one part of a much larger range of gear in a professional studio, so fluent use is of real importance when learning to operate a studio as a whole.

The second field visit will be to Glasgow's **The Glad Café**, south of the city. The Glad Café has become a firm favourite venue of many of Glasgow's music fans since it opened only a few years back. Chem19 has had the pleasure of staging many Demo Fund nights here over the years, showcasing some of the best emerging talent from the area. This year we are delighted to bring The Glad Café into proceedings, with SoundLAB staging a weekend afternoon session introducing students to the fundamentals of live recording in their own 120 capacity venue, using their existing desk and equipment. This will be planned for mid May, towards the end of the course, when students are familiar with the main principles of signal flow and other various concepts and tools that overlap with live engineering.

COURSE DATES

The course will run on a Tuesday, every week with the exception of around Easter when there will be a break. On each teaching day there will be two separate groups of 6 students, one group taught in the morning from 10am – 2pm and one in the evening from 5:30pm – 9:30pm. You are welcome to indicate which time would suit you best when applying but **we will not be able to guarantee the preferred time slot should you be offered a place on the course**, as we wish to keep the group sizes to no more than 6 students to maintain the highest quality learning experience.

Wk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Month	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
Date	4 th	11 th	18 th	25 th	3 rd	10 th	17 th	24 th	31 st

Wk	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Month	Apr	Apr	May	May	May	May	Jun	Jun	Jun
Date	21 st	28 th	5 th	12 th	19 th	26 th	2 nd	TBC	16 th

Note: The Jun TBC date is a full day recording session, to be arranged nearer the time on a weekend.

In addition to the above dates, both field visits to Ayrshire College and The Glad Café will also be added in due course, on two separate weekend afternoons.