



A Level Music

Why study Music?

Music is all around us in so many different forms, and A Level Music offers the chance to develop a greater understanding of how it has influenced society throughout the ages. Music is mathematical – it is rhythmically based on the subdivisions of time into fractions which must be done instantaneously. Music is a world of language – most of the terms are in Italian, German or French and the semantics of music is a complete and universal language. Music is history – it reflects the environment and times of its creation, taking on the emotion of a nation, region or a people. Music is art – it is the only art form we can hear as people hundreds of years ago had. Unlike paint, whose image is always there once created, music is perpetually “repainted” each time it is performed. A Level Music is the chance to develop understanding of how music has transformed over time and to foster a deeper appreciation of different styles and genres.

What is the course structure?

In A Level Music, students will have the opportunity to develop performance skills (solo and ensemble), compose music and learn about harmony. They will also develop their aural and analytical skills by studying set pieces from the Edexcel A Level Anthology of Music.

More information can be found by visiting the Edexcel website and downloading the course specification at:

A Level:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/Music/2016/Specification%20and%20sample%20assessments/GCE-music-specification-A-Level-2015.pdf>

During the A Level course, students will complete the following:

A Level

Component 1 – Performing Music:

This unit presents the opportunity to perform one or more pieces in the form of a recital. The piece(s) can be in any chosen style and can be presented as a soloist or part of an ensemble. The recital should be a minimum of 8 minutes. This is worth 30% of the total A grade.

Component 2 – Composing Music:

This unit focuses on the further development of compositional skills leading to the creation of two compositions, one to a brief OR a free composition, and the other from a list of briefs assessing compositional technique. The total time for both compositions must be a minimum of 6 minutes. This is worth 30% of the total A grade.

Component 3 – Appraising:

This unit focuses on listening to music, familiar and unfamiliar, and understanding how it works, set pieces from the areas of study and extended response. This is assessed through a two hour listening paper, set and marked by Edexcel, at the end of the year and is worth 40% of the total A grade.

Which activities will I be engaged in during the course?

Music lessons are versatile, engaging, informative and interactive. Students will have the opportunity to take part in many activities including:

- Research tasks on different composers, musical styles, genres and eras.
- Solo and ensemble performance with other members of the class.
- Compositional techniques and tasks, including rewriting a piece of popular music in a different genre.
- Evaluating their own and others' musical work in order to further develop their own musical understanding.
- Using computer software packages such as Sibelius and Logic to apply different compositional tools to their own work.
- The opportunity for school visits to concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, the Southbank Centre, the Royal Opera House and the Royal Festival Hall.

How can I prepare for the course?

The following is a list of recommended textbooks and websites in preparation for studying AS/A Level Music which will be referred to throughout the course:

- The Cambridge Music Guide: edited by Stanley Sadie – this textbook provides comprehensive background information to the genres and styles that will be studied throughout the course
- The AB Guide to Music Theory Parts I and II: Eric Taylor – recommended textbooks for developing music theory
- Grade 5 Music Theory in Practice: Eric Taylor
- The Edexcel AS/A Level Anthology of Music – excerpts of this textbook will be provided but it should be considered an optional purchase for the purposes of note taking and analysis
- Analysis notes are made available on the Edexcel website which cover all the set works for the examination. These can be found by visiting: www.edexcel.com and searching under Support Materials
- For music theory, listening exercises and general musicianship visit www.musictheory.net

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