

MUSIC (AQA)



Course Content & Assessment

Students would normally have completed GCSE music as a pre-requisite to A level, although in exceptional circumstances this is not always necessary.

Part 1: Appraising Music – 40%

- The A level covers 3 Areas of Study, one of which is compulsory (Western Classical tradition 1650-1900). Two further Areas of Study are chosen from a wide-ranging list. Recently, the two optional chosen Areas of Study have been Music for Media and Music for Theatre, featuring music from Hans Zimmer, Thomas Newman, Michael Giacchino, Stephen Sondheim, Richard Rodgers and Jason Robert Brown.
- Skills are both subject specific and transferable, and include:
 - Critical appraisal of literary and aural material;
 - The application of historical musical and social context to aural excerpts;
 - Increased aural awareness, and decision-making in relation to unseen material.
- Examined via a 2 hour 30 minute exam paper taken in June of Year 13.

Part 2: Performance – 35%

- Students give a minimum 10-minute recital in the Spring term of Year 13. Assessment is via recording that is sent to the Exam Board. Choice of repertoire is guided by the student's interests and strengths. There is no specific minimum difficulty, although it is expected that students are playing to at least Grade 6 standard on their chosen instrument by the Spring term of Year 13.

Part 3: Composing – 25%

- Students complete two compositions over the course: one is free choice and the other responds to a brief set by the Exam Board in September of year 13. Alongside composing, students learn rudimentary and more advanced harmonization techniques. This is marked externally.

Whilst there is little preparatory reading for A level music, an aural and historical familiarity with the life and work of the named composers featured on the course will stand students in good stead.

Named composers:

Area of Study 1: Western Classical Tradition 1650-1900: Purcell, Vivaldi, Bach, Mozart, Chopin, Brahms, Grieg.

Area of Study 3: Music for Media: Hans Zimmer, Thomas Newman, Bernard Herrmann, Michael Giacchino, Nobuo Uematsu.

Area of Study 4: Music for Theatre: Kurt Weill, Richard Rodgers, Stephen Sondheim, Claude-Michel Schoenberg, Jason Robert Brown.