Integrity
Curiosity
Respect



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A LEVEL

# Music

## WHAT IS MUSIC?

Music is the study of performance, composition and aural listening and analysis of musical scores. It is about interpreting what composers have written into your own expressive performance, learning how to create your own music and explore harmony, tonality and melody. It is also about learning to understand all the complex elements that go into the creation of a successful piece of music.

## WHY STUDENTS CHOOSE THIS COURSE

Most students choose to study this course if they are considering studying a higher-level Music course in the future, however some students choose it simply due to their love of music making, composing and listening to music.

Although performance work is a substantial aspect of the course, students do also need to be confident composers and have a depth of understanding related to score reading and extended writing skills, as there is a requirement to write essays about the set works in the listening paper. Anyone who has studied music at GCSE will have covered all aspects of these areas and have a good grounding for A level.

## WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO WITH THIS COURSE

The A level course is the ideal preparation for going on to study music in any capacity, either for an academic course at university, or a performance-based course at one of the specialist music colleges.

It requires you to enhance skills in all areas of listening, analysis, essay writing, composition and performance work.

For those not wishing to study music beyond A level you will also develop skills such as critical thinking, decision making, the ability to evaluate in depth, independence, creativity and confidence, which are valuable to any prospective employer or for any university studies.

## HOW THIS COURSE IS ASSESSED

We follow the AQA syllabus. Each unit has the following weightings towards the overall A level Grade:

**Performance:** One solo (acoustic/ music technology) and one ensemble, worth 35%.

**Composition:** One piece to a brief and one piece of free composition worth 25%.

**Appraising:** A 2 hour 30 minute written exam comprising of listening work, analysis work and essay writing. Worth 40%.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

All our course entry requirements are detailed in the Entry Requirements document located in the admissions section of our website.

## FURTHER READING

ABC of Harmony, Jazz by Roy Wilkinson, The Story of Music by Howard Goodall, How Music Works by John Powell, Music – A very Short Introduction by Nicholas Cooke, Listen to This by Alex Ross.

# What the course covers

The course is based around the three main skills of performing, composing and appraising music. Students must be able to perform as a soloist and/ or within an ensemble. For composition, students will be required to create 2 pieces of original work, one to a brief set by the exam board and one piece of free composition where you may write in any style and for any combination of instruments/voices.

The appraisal of music combines several different skills; the analysis of music from a score, listening critically to music to identify features and then evaluating and writing about music in essay style questions where you will need to utilise key musical language to show your understanding of what you are seeing and hearing. When approaching the appraising work, there will be a balance between studying key set works from the board, as well as being prepared to tackle previously unheard pieces in the same style or from the same artists/composers in the exam.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be found on the examination board's website at: www.aqa.org.uk