



A-Level Course Information



Qualification: Advanced Level Music

Exam Board: Edexcel

Subject Leader: Mr B. Parker

Entry Requirements:

Minimum Entry Requirements:

5 x 5s

4 in English and Maths

Subject Specific Entry Requirements:

6 in GCSE Music and at least one instrument/voice to Grade 5

If not taken at GCSE, Grade 5 or above in an instrument & theory is required.

Why study Music?

Music A-level is about building skills in performance and composition and gaining a broad musical knowledge through the study of set works. Choose to study Music if you are a proficient instrumentalist or singer and/or have a strong interest in composing your own music. The A-level Music course is a valuable qualification in its own right as it not only demonstrates academic, practical and creative skills but also highlights your qualities of self-discipline and commitment.

Music students should be accomplished instrumentalists or singers of at least Grade Five standard on at least one instrument or voice and Grade Five standard for theory.

What can I do with Music after A-Level?

You may wish to study Music in Higher Education either on an academic degree course or on a more practically based course for performers. The A-Level provides a sound basis for students wishing to proceed to degree courses in Music or Performing Arts. It can lead to careers in teaching, performing and composition as well as related areas in publishing and media. It combines well with most other subjects but compliments in particular Theatre Studies and Music Technology.

Music Extras

It is assumed that those taking A-level will wish to contribute significantly to the many performance opportunities organised by the music department and to find time to visit live events elsewhere. Arrangements will be made for you to attend numerous professional concerts in London and Cambridge throughout the year and to participate in workshops led by Cambridge University Outreach.

You will be encouraged to participate in the well-established exchange with Modelleschule Obersberg, Bad Hersfeld, Germany, undertaking ongoing, joint online composition and research projects.

What will I study?

The subject content for A-Level Music is divided into three components:

- 1) Performing
- 2) Composing
- 3) Appraising

Component 1 – Performing - A public performance of one or more pieces, performed as a recital.

- Performance can be playing or singing solo, in an ensemble, improvising, or realising music using music technology.
- The total performance time across all pieces must be a minimum of 8 minutes.
- Performances must be recorded between 1 March and 15 May in the year of certification.
- Free choice of instrument, styles and pieces to perform.

Non-examined assessment: externally assessed

30% of the A-level

Component 2 – Composing

2 compositions, a minimum of 6 minutes in total.

One composition must be from either a list of briefs related to the areas of study, or a free composition, carrying 2/3 marks for this component. At least 4 minutes in duration.

One composition must be from a list of briefs assessing compositional technique, carrying 1/3 marks for this component. At least 1 minute in duration.

Non-examined assessment: externally assessed

30% of the A-Level

Component 3 – Appraising

This unit focuses on listening to familiar music, understanding how it works and applying this understanding to other music. Set works from six areas of study provide the focus. Through listening and studying scores, you will familiarise yourself with each work as a whole, before learning how to identify important musical features and social and historical context. There is also a short aural melody/rhythm completion exercise.

Assessment: 2-hour examination

40% of the A-level

Set works:

Vocal Music

- J. S. Bach, Cantata, Ein feste Burg ● Vaughan Williams, On Wenlock Edge

Instrumental Music

- Clara Wieck-Schumann, Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17: movement 1 ● Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique

Music for Film

- Danny Elfman, Batman Returns ● Bernard Herrmann, Psycho

Popular Music and Jazz

- Courtney Pine, Back in the Day ● Kate Bush, Hounds of Love ● Beatles, Revolver

Fusions

- Debussy, Estampes ● Anoushka Shankar, Breathing Under Water

New Directions

- Kaija Saariaho, Petals for Violoncello and Live Electronics ● Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring