

# MUSIC



# MUSIC IN THE SIXTH FORM

There is a lot of choice in A Level Music. This means it may appeal to you whether you are a member of an orchestra, a choir or are a rock musician. You will be required to develop and demonstrate your musicianship skills through performing, composing and appraising. You will need to listen to, and study the techniques of diverse styles of music, ranging from the more traditional 'classical' to film music, popular music and jazz. Whatever your preferred musical style, there is a lot of opportunity for practical music-making as part of the course, which consists of the following:

## WHAT WILL YOU STUDY?

The course is split into three units:

### UNIT 1: PERFORMING (30%)

You will prepare for a public performance/recital lasting a minimum of 8 minutes. You can perform on any instrument(s) and /or voice and your recital can include either solo and/or ensemble pieces.

The choice of pieces is yours, but the technical standard expected is around Grade 7 (extra credit given for Grade 8 and above standard).

You will be assessed on your accuracy of pitch, rhythm and performance detail as well as your tone, interpretation, use of tempo and style. You will also be assessed on your communication skills as a performer.

### UNIT 2: COMPOSING (30%)

You will develop your composition skills and produce two compositions totalling a minimum of 5 minutes.

One of your compositions will be in response to a set brief given by the examination board or a free-choice composition. The second piece will be a technical study set by Edexcel.

The compositions must be presented as a score (or lead sheet/track sheet/diagram as appropriate) and as a recording.

#### TYPES OF COMPOSITION

Brief relating to areas of study:

1. Vocal Music
2. Instrumental Music
3. Music for Film
4. Popular Music and Jazz
5. Fusion
6. New Directions OR Free Composition

Briefs assessing technique:

1. Bach Chorale
2. Two-part counterpoint
3. Arrangement
4. Remix

### UNIT 3: APPRAISING (40%)

- This unit is assessed by a two-hour examination
- In this unit you will study set pieces of music by listening and reading scores to identify important musical features as well as social and historical context. You will be provided with an anthology of scores. You will focus on your application of knowledge through the context of six areas of study, each with three set works:

#### 1. Vocal Music

- J. S. Bach, Cantata, Ein feste Burg, BWV 80: Movements 1, 2 and 8
- Mozart, The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte): Excerpts from Act 1, Nos. 4 (The Queen of Night) and 5 (Quintet)
- Vaughan Williams, On Wenlock Edge: Nos. 1, 3 and 5 ('On Wenlock Edge', 'Is my team ploughing?' and 'Bredon Hill')

#### 2. Instrumental Music

- Vivaldi, Concerto in D minor, Op. 3 No. 11
- Clara Schumann, Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17: Movement 1
- Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique: Movement 1

#### 3. Music for Film

- Danny Elfman, Batman Returns: Main theme (Birth of a Penguin Part II), Birth of a Penguin Part I, Rise and fall from grace, Batman vs the Circus
- Rachel Portman, The Duchess: The Duchess and End titles, Mistake of your life, Six years later, Never see your children again
- Bernard Herrmann, Psycho: Prelude, The City, Marion, The Murder (Shower Scene), The Toys, The Cellar, Discovery, Finale



#### 4. Popular Music and Jazz

- Kate Bush, Hounds of Love: Cloudbusting, And Dream of Sheep, Under Ice
- Courtney Pine, Back in the Day: Inner state (of mind), Lady Day and (John Coltrane), Love and affection
- Beatles, Revolver: Here, there and everywhere, I want to tell you, Tomorrow never knows

#### 5. Fusions

- Debussy, 'Estampes': Nos. 1 and 2 ('Pagodes' and 'La soirée dans Grenade')
- Familia Valera Miranda, Caña Quema: 'Allà va candela, Se quema la chumbambà
- Anoushka Shankar, Breathing Under Water: Burn, Breathing Under Water, Easy

#### 6. New Directions

- Cage, Three Dances for two prepared pianos: No. 1
- Kaija Saariaho, Petals for Violoncello and Live Electronics
- Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring: Introduction, The Augurs of Spring, Ritual of Abduction

You will also be assessed on your application of knowledge to unfamiliar works.



# WHAT WILL THE EXAMINATION BE LIKE?

## ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

You will get an individual audio CD with the extracts to accompany questions on the paper, which is in two sections: A and B.

### SECTION A: AREAS OF STUDY AND DICTATION (50 MARKS)

- Three questions related to the set works (audio and skeleton score given).
- One short melody/rhythm completion exercise.

### SECTION B: EXTENDED RESPONSE

- Two essay questions: essay one (20 marks) and essay two (30 marks).
- Essay one will ask you to draw links from your study of the set works to the music heard as an unfamiliar extract.
- Essay two gives a choice of three questions and will ask you to evaluate the musical elements, context and language of one set work. Each option will be from a different area of study.

## REFORMED A LEVEL

Music is now a reformed A Level. You will submit all of your work for assessment at the end of the second year (Year 13).

**MUSIC EXPRESSES THAT WHICH  
CANNOT BE SAID AND ON WHICH  
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE SILENT**

*- Victor Hugo*

If you would like to discuss the A Level specification and the options that the Music Department offer, please don't hesitate to contact the Music School

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