

Subject: Music	Awarding Body: Edexcel
Head of Dept: Miss Cassells	Teacher: Miss Cassells

Preferred entry requirements:
Grade 5 or above in GCSE Music, minimum Grade 5 pass in one instrument, Grade 5 theory or Grade 5 Jazz instrumental examination.

Specification Content

A level		
Component	Requirements	Marks
Paper 1 Performing	Public performance of minimum 8 minutes duration. The performance can be playing or singing solo, in an ensemble, improvising, or realising music using music technology. This element is externally assessed.	60 marks 30% of total A Level
Paper 2 Composing	Two compositions, one to a brief set by the examination board and one either free composition or also to a brief. The total time across both submissions must be a minimum of 6 minutes. This element is externally assessed.	60 marks 30% of total A Level
Paper 3 Appraising	One written paper of 2 hours, comprising familiar and unfamiliar pieces.	100 marks 40% of total A Level

Structure of the course:
For the Performing units, relatively little class time is needed. Our role is to ensure you understand the requirements and have selected pieces to perform of an appropriate standard and duration. Your role is to extend your practice routine by an extra hour per week so that you achieve the best possible marks. The Composing units involve the study of models, both to inspire the free composition and the techniques. A series of progressive technical exercises will develop your ability to harmonise a melody. The Listening units develop your understanding of how the Set Works “work”. Study of each piece involves comparison of the melodies, rhythms, textures and structures in each work. The range of pieces is very wide and includes classical, jazz, pop, film and world music. Homework tasks will include research into composers and their backgrounds, but once you have learned the main skills of musical analysis, you will be expected to uncover the secrets of the music for yourself.

Methodology:
The course has a healthy balance between practical and academic aspects, and one key feature is the importance of individual responsibility. This is especially true of the performing and composing work but also of the listening lessons. Groups are small, so there is no hiding place, but students seem to enjoy the content and appreciate the support they receive. Music is an inescapable part of human existence, and studying for the A Level is an opportunity to share in and appreciate something that people can't help doing. Students are encouraged to read widely around the historical and stylistic context of the set works, listen to a broad diet of music in their own time and attend as many 'live' concerts as possible (trips will be arranged as appropriate).

Strengths/Skills developed through studying this subject:
Performing musicians develop skills of concentration, attention to detail, confidence in public performing, self-discipline, communication and determination. Students develop their ICT skills through use of the music software programmes available. Students refine their instrumental/vocal skill and develop lifetime talents.

What students do with this qualification:
An A Level in Music opens many doors and closes none. There are two obvious, direct lines of progression into Higher Education – to a Music degree at a university or to a performing course at a Conservatoire. These courses are now much more varied than used to be the case and include the study of all types of musical tradition and the music business itself. **Pupils are awarded extra UCAS points for each examination grade passed (VI and above) from the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music, which enhances their capacity to gain the university place of their choice.** Careers as music teachers, whether in the classroom or the practice room, or as performers or composers are the natural next step. Beyond these, however, there are many careers available in arts administration and management, for students who perhaps don't aspire to be professional performers but who want to help orchestras or theatres to develop their audiences or reach out into their communities. Music therapy is another option for those with an interest in psychology and working with young (or elderly) people.