

Music A Level

Course Description:

OCR Music A Level focuses on the same areas of study as in GCSE; Performing, Composing and Appraising. You are required to complete two compositions and perform for 8-10 minutes as a soloist. The exam consists of analysis of previously seen works and assesses a variety of skills from aural dictation, identification of instrument / vocal sounds, chords, key and cadences to extended essay style answers about the context of music and comparisons with similar composers and styles.

Qualifications Required:

Minimum entry requirements apply. We also prefer candidates to have a Grade 6 or above in GCSE Music, Grade 5 in GCSE English and are Grade V standard on your instrument/voice. You may apply to take A Level Music if you have not completed GCSE, if you have completed Grade V theory and are Grade VI or above on your first instrument/voice and Grade IV or above on a second instrument/voice.

Aims of the Course:

- Improve performing: Interpret musical ideas through performing, with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context
- Develop composition skills: Create, develop and refine musical ideas with technical and expressive control using inspiration from music studied
- Develop theoretical comprehension through analysis and evaluation of music, both written and in performance and developing a thorough understanding of musical scores through detailed analysis
- Widen knowledge of music through exploration of musical styles from a variety of genres

Future Prospects:

Further study opportunities: Music degree or further education

Career prospects:

- Armed forces specialising in Music,
- Education; Primary, Secondary, Peripatetic, Adult
- Performing/Composing/Recording as a professional; Symphony Orchestra / Professional Choir
- Music management
- Public Relations and Advertising; Radio and Television
- Health sector: Music Therapy,
- Instrumental work and development,
- Musicologist/Music historian,
- Community Music,

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Student Feedback:

“Music is great fun! We get to learn about so many different genres; classical, jazz, rock and film music to mention a few. It is providing me with a thorough understanding in preparation for my plans in the future: Music in the RAF!”

“I have loved the opportunity to look in depth at pieces of music which I thought I knew when I heard them. The analysis of music has made me realise how much more I can do on my own instrument now I know the patterns and techniques used by the composers I have studied.”

Features of the Course:

- Develop performing skill: students are provided with a weekly 20 minute lesson in their first instrument and a chosen second instrument
- Develop effective independent learners and musicians who think and perform with intelligence and reflection both as a soloist and as part of an ensemble
- Develop composing skills to demonstrate the manipulation of musical ideas and the use of musical devices and conventions
- Broaden musical experiences and interests through listening to a wide variety of music and attending live performances

A Level Units

Performing A:

Recital

Minimum of 6 minutes and two contrasting pieces. Choice of:

- Solo piece(s) on one or more than one instrument or voice
- Ensemble performance
- Accompanying
- Realisation of music technology

Compositions

With a combined duration of at least 8 minutes:

- One brief set by the exam board
- One brief written by the learner
- Three short technical exercises

Listening and Appraising

- Analysing and evaluating music
- Familiar and unfamiliar pieces
- Prescribed works
- Questions based on aural extracts

OR Performing B:

Recital

Minimum of 10 minutes and three contrasting pieces. Choice of:

- Solo piece(s) on one or more than one instrument or voice
- Ensemble performance (including accompanying)
- Realisation of music technology

Compositions

With a combined duration of at least 4 minutes:

- One brief set by the exam board
- One brief written by the learner
- Three short technical exercises

Methods of Assessment:

Recitals: non-exam assessment – externally assessed via audio-visual recording

Compositions: non-exam assessment – externally assessed via audio-visual recording

Listening and Appraising : 2½ hour written exam, including aural extracts