Music A Level

Course Description:

Eduqas Music A Level focuses on the same areas of study as in GCSE; Performing, Composing and Appraising. The course is unique in having a high level of independence and specialisation; students can choose to major in either Performing or Composing, and are encouraged to develop personal styles as a performer and composer. Students will also be able to choose their second Area of Study (either Pop & Rock, Musical Theatre or Jazz). The exam tests listening skills as well as knowledge of style and context, requiring students to analyse unseen extracts and compare with other works they have studied.

Qualifications Required:

Minimum entry requirements apply. Grade 5 GCSE Music. Instrumental/vocal performance ability equivalent to at least Grade 5 ABRSM or similar is also advisable.
Candidates who have not studied Music at GCSE may still apply to take A Level Music. We will assess candidates for suitability on a case-by-case basis, but typically we would require an instrumental/vocal standard of Grade 5 ABRSM or equivalent, and either a portfolio of compositions or a Music Theory standard of at least Grade 3.

Aims of the Course:

- Develop independence and self-directed study
- Widen knowledge of music through exploration of musical styles from a variety of genres
- Develop performing skills: create individual interpretations of musical repertoire, demonstrating technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context
- Develop composition skills: Establish a distinct personal compositional style by creating, developing and refining musical ideas showing understanding of music studied
- Develop theoretical comprehension through analysis and evaluation of music, including detailed analysis of set works

Future Prospects:

Further study opportunities: Music degree or further education. Music qualifications are highly sought-after by a huge range of higher education courses and graduate careers (eg Law, Consultancy, Recruitment)
Career prospects:

- Musical performance
- Conductor/Musical Director
- Sound engineer (live sound/recording studio)
- Computer game composition and recording
- Film and TV composition and recording
- Armed forces specialising in Music
- Education
- Music management
- Radio and Television
- Music Therapy
- Instrumental design, development and manufacture
- Musicologist/Music historian

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Student Feedback:

"Music is great fun! We get to learn about so many different genres. 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 skills: students are provided with a weekly 30 minute lesson in their first instrument to support with this
- Develop as effective independent learners and musicians who perform, compose and analyse music with intelligence and reflection
- 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 Components:

Component 1 – Performing
An assessed performance in front of a visiting examiner. Candidates have a choice

Either Option A (35%) – Total duration of 10-12 minutes
A least 3 pieces, one of which must be a solo
Pieces must reflect characteristics of two different Areas of Study

Or Option B (25%) – Total duration of 6-8 minutes
At least 2 pieces, one of which must reflect characteristics of an Area of Study

Component 2 – Composing
A coursework portfolio, externally assessed. Candidates have a choice of:

Either Option A (25%) – 2 compositions, total duration of 4-6 minutes
One must be to an exam board brief and reflect characteristics of Area of Study A
The other is a "free" composition to a student-set brief

Or Option B (35%) – 3 compositions, total duration of 8-10 minutes
One must be to an exam board brief and reflect characteristics of Area of Study A
The second must reflect characteristics of a different Area of Study
The third is a "free" composition to a student-set brief

Component 3 – Appraising
Written examination lasting 2 hours 15 minutes (40%)
Students answer questions on three areas of study, including four set works

- Area of Study A (Western Classical Tradition – the Symphony 1750-1900)
- A choice of AoSB (Rock and Pop), AoSC (Musical Theatre) or AoSD (Jazz)
- A choice of AoSE (Into the 20th Century) or AoSF (Into the 21st Century)

Methods of Assessment:

Performance: exam assessment – visiting examiner
Composition: non-exam assessment – externally assessed
Listening and Appraising : 2¼ hour written exam, including listening extracts