

Music

Edexcel A-level Music (9MU0)

Head of Department: Mr Paul Johnson-Hyde

Introduction

The A-level course in music is challenging and varied because a fully rounded musical education requires a wide range of skills. Students' study of music is strengthened by access to a wide range of musical opportunities, co-curricular activities, trips, concerts and events throughout the academic year.

Subject Requirements

To start the course you need to have a strong interest in all areas of the subject. You will also need to be performing on any instrument/voice at approximately Grade 6 standard at least. It is not necessary to have taken GCSE music, although the skills developed on that course will be useful during the Sixth Form.

Course Outline

Component 1 – Performing (30%):

Preparation for performance and regular performing opportunities will be a feature of the whole course but the final assessment, taking place between 1 March and 14 May of the Upper Sixth year, will be a recorded public recital lasting at least eight minutes. The performance can be as a soloist, as part of an ensemble, or both. Within the dates given above this recital can be recorded as many times as required. The recording of this recital is assessed by external examiners.

Component 2 – Composing (30%):

Two compositions must be submitted by 15 May of the Upper Sixth year: a) A free composition (this is worth 20% of the A-level) b) A composition to a brief assessing technique (this is worth 10% of the A-level) (b) involves completing technical exercises which are prepared for in the Lower Sixth and then applied to briefs issued during the Upper Sixth year. One of four options must be submitted: a chorale harmonisation in the style of JS Bach; a two-part Baroque counterpoint; an arrangement of a given melody; or a remix. Both compositions are assessed by external examiners.

Component 3 – Appraising (40%):

Preparation for the two-hour examination paper covers the study of set works from six compulsory areas of study:

- Vocal Music
- Instrumental Music
- Music for Film
- Popular Music and Jazz
- Fusions
- New Directions

The examination will expect the set works to be related to wider listening, and will also require some analysis of unfamiliar music.

Higher Education and Careers

The breadth of the skills developed during the course mean that music is highly respected by all universities. It is not just a subject for those who wish to pursue a musical career in the future.

What should I study alongside music?

Music can be combined with most subjects, and former students have included music alongside sciences, social sciences, humanities, languages or a mixture of these.