

A Level Music

What the course covers

The course is based around the three main skills of performing, composing and appraising music. Students must be able to perform as a soloist and / or within an ensemble. There is also the option of creating a performance via music technology for those students who prefer to create a solo performance in that way. For composition, students will be required to create 2 pieces of original work, one to a brief sent by the exam board and one piece of free composition where you may write in any style and for any combination of instruments / voices. The appraisal of music combines several different skills; the analysis of music from a score, listening critically to music to identify features and then evaluating and writing about music in essay style questions where you will need to utilise key musical language to show your understanding of what you are seeing and hearing. When approaching the appraising work, there will be a balance between studying key set works from the board, as well as being prepared to tackle previously unheard pieces in the same style or from the same artists / composers in the exam. The set works come from a wide range of time periods and genres including; popular and jazz music, music for film and theatre, vocal music, instrumental music (within the Western Classical Tradition) and contemporary music.

The complete specification can be viewed on the AQA website. www.aqa.org.uk

What students can do with this course

The A Level course is the ideal preparation for going on to study music in any capacity, either for an academic course at University, or a performance-based course at one of the specialist music colleges. It requires you to enhance skills in all areas of listening, analysis, essay writing, composition and performance work. In a broader sense, students also develop skills such as team work, decision making, creativity and confidence, which are valuable to any prospective employer or University.

How this course is assessed

We follow the AQA syllabus. There is a slight difference in weighting for assessed units, which is reflected in the information below:

Performance: one solo (acoustic / music technology) and one ensemble (35%)

Composition: one piece to a brief and one piece of free composition (25%)

Appraising: A 2.5 hour written exam at the end of year 2, comprising of listening work, analysis work and essay writing (40%)

Entry requirements

All our course entry requirements are detailed in the Entry Requirements document located in the admissions section of our website.