

Why choose A-level music?

Enjoyment.
Motivation.
Academic achievement.
Confidence.
Fulfilment.



How will A Level Music help me in the future? In the future, Creativity is going to be one of the most important and in-demand skills at work (World Economic Forum.) When business leaders across the world were surveyed, they voted Creativity as the most important workplace capability to help their businesses survive and grow. This means that the study of creative subjects, like Music, is becoming even more important and relevant to young people to give you the chance to succeed - whatever your ambitions. At the same time, you will find many opportunities to develop and improve your personal wellbeing both independently and as part of a wider community

Reasons to choose Music:

- You can develop your existing performance ability and use this towards achieving an A level.
- If you already enjoy writing your own music or songs, you can use this ability and experience, and learn how to develop your ideas into successful pieces.
- If you love listening to music, you will learn more about what makes the music you enjoy work so well.

Where could A-level music lead?

It could lead to a Music degree:

here's what Oxford University says about theirs:

"The varied nature of the course enables students to develop highly desirable skills in areas such as self-management, creativity, data analysis, performance, teamwork, problem-solving, and communication, all of which makes them an attractive prospect for potential employers... other popular destinations for Music graduates... include broadcasting, publishing, law, politics and the Civil Service. Rather than limiting your career prospects, a music degree opens doors to a wide range of careers."⁵

If you don't want to be a musician or study music at University, A-level music is still a smart choice.

It can open doors to a range of education and employment pathways in:

Music

Being a musician isn't the only career in music – other options include being a sound technician, community musician, music therapist, teacher, or private tutor, or a range of careers in the music industry, in a concert hall or music venue.

The arts/creative industries

This might include work in film, TV, theatre, radio, arts administration, or creative education.

Professions such as medicine, law, accountancy

Music is highly regarded as an academic subject and so could complement your other studies in leading to a professional career.

MYTH BUSTED: Music does not stop you getting into a profession such as law or medicine.

Any other pathway a young person might choose

A-level music provides a range of transferable skills that will provide a good foundation, whatever pathway your child chooses.

Subject specific entry requirements

What standard do I need to have reached/what qualifications do I need?

- Students will need to have a C grade in GCSE Music.
- Ideally you need to be Grade 5/6 standard on an instrument (or voice) at AS Level and be able to reach Grade 6/7 by the end of the course in Year 13

What subjects will it go well with?

Music is very mathematical in nature, and so Music and Maths complement each other well, so do Music and Languages - after all, music is a language in its own right. In fact, Music goes well with pretty much any subject and some people believe that studying music can actually enhance your grades in other subjects.

MYTH BUSTED:

You do not have to play multiple instruments or have Grade 8.

Listening paper overview - Content / Syllabus

The WJEC A Level Music course has three elements: Performing, Composing and Appraising (Listening.)
The following chart shows you a summary of what you will study for the exam.

The Western Classical Tradition (Compulsory)

AS: either

**The Symphony (1760-1830) or
Religious Choral Music (1730-1800)**

Detailed study of two movements of a symphony or a section from a Requiem mass, and general study of the genre, within the social, historical and cultural context.

Haydn, Symphony 103 in D major, Drum Roll. (movements 1 and 2)

or

Mozart, Requiem (*Requiem, Dies Irae, Tuba Mirum and Rex Tremendae.*)

AL: either

**The Symphony (1830-1910) or
Religious Choral Music (1800-1890)**

Detailed study of one movement of a symphony or a section from a Requiem mass, and general study of the genre, within the social, historical and cultural context.

Brahms, Symphony No.1 in C minor, opus 68, movement 4.

or

Verdi, Requiem (*Dies Irae including Tuba mirum, Liber scriptus, Quid sum miser, Rex tremendae and Recordare ending b.446.*)

Optional areas – choose 1

AS: Rock and Pop 1960-2000

Pop (including funk and disco)

Rock (including progressive rock and heavy metal)

Soul

Country

AS: Musical Theatre

Cole Porter

Richard Rodgers

Claude-Michel Schonberg

Andrew Lloyd Webber

AS: Jazz 1920-1950

Big band (including swing)

Be-bop

Cool jazz

AL: Popular Music in Wales

Gruff Rhys

Super Furry Animas

Manic Street Preachers

Kizzy Crawford

**AL: American Musical
Theatre**

Stephen Sondheim

Stephen Schwartz

AL: Jazz Legends

Duke Ellington

Miles Davis

Optional areas – choose 1 at A Level only

Impressionism

Detailed study of 1 set works and 2 subsidiary pieces:

Debussy *Reflets Dans L'eau* (Images vol 1,) Piano

Debussy *Colloque Sentimental*, Voice and piano

Ravel *Mother Goose*, Prelude from the ballet

Chamber Music in Wales

Detailed study of 1 set works and 2 subsidiary pieces:

Plowman: *Night Dances*, flute and piano

Wilson-Dickson: *Tango Passacaglia*, flute and piano

Samuel: *Ariel*, flute and piano

Work required - Levels of effort needed

1. Produce two compositions using either Musecore or Sibelius

- One Set Brief (Western Classical Style)
- One Free Choice

You will have several composition lessons a fortnight where you will be able to work on your pieces in class and get feedback and advice from your teachers. However you will need to prepare for composition lessons at home also. Composition is a process that develops gradually over time, therefore you will need to be prepared to put in a lot of effort in this area of the course to reach a high standard.

2. Harmony exercises/ Aural dictation

In order to be able to write a Western Classical Composition and analyse the Western Classical Set Works in the listening part of the course, you will study Harmony at A Level. You will be expected to complete various harmony exercises for homework. Building on aural dictation skills studied at GCSE you may also be required to complete aural dictation questions for homework also.

Work required - Levels of effort needed

3. Rehearsing pieces for the Practical Assessment

You will need to prepare a performance consisting of a minimum of two pieces. One piece must reflect the musical characteristics of one area of study. Total duration of performances: 6-8 minutes at AS Level and either 10-12 minutes at A Level or 6-8 minutes (depending on whether you have chosen extended performance or composition).

Performing is assessed by a visiting examiner, giving a much more realistic scenario than a recording, allowing students to demonstrate their communication of the music to the listener, and giving a real sense of occasion.

Students in Year 13 can choose whether they wish to be assessed on a longer performance or submit a third composition, allowing them to develop their preferred specialism.

4. Listening paper preparation and essay writing skills

You will study a variety of styles and composers through the course. You will need to be prepared to analyse various extracts and create drafts of essays on the set works and unseen pieces. You will also need to be prepared to complete some wider listening as part of your homework.

Finding out more -

WJEC Syllabus <https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/fsybcs5b/wjec-gce-music-spec-from-2016-e.pdf>

AS Level Set Work - Haydn Symphony 103 (Drum Roll)

https://resource.download.wjec.co.uk/vtc/2015-16/15-16_24/Drum%20Roll_Teachers%20Notes.pdf

https://resource.download.wjec.co.uk/vtc/2015-16/15-16_24/Drum%20Roll_Teachers%20Notes.pdf

Musical Theatre shows to get you started:

- Anything Goes (Cole Porter)
- Oklahoma (Richard Rodgers)
- Phantom of the Opera (Andrew Lloyd Webber)
- Les Miserables (Claude Michel Schonberg)

Useful websites:

<https://alevelmusic.com/>

[https://resources.hwb.wales.gov.uk/VTC/2008-09/music/irf08_04\(3\)/index.html](https://resources.hwb.wales.gov.uk/VTC/2008-09/music/irf08_04(3)/index.html)