



AS/A Level Music Course Outline

Overview

Music AS and A Level offer exciting opportunities for the study of music through both practical and academic disciplines. This course allows you to study music in a fully integrated way as a practical, intellectual and creative subject. The courses also recognise that we live in an age of cultural diversity and the Areas of Study reflect this with a wide range of music studied. The three core elements of Performance, Composition and Historical Study are taught and assessed in each of the two years of the course. This course is designed to extend the GCSE skills of Performing, Composing and Listening, in ways which emphasize their interdependence. Students are encouraged to study the widest possible range of music from folk, jazz, popular and classical traditions of western and non-western origin. Throughout the course students also develop skills in the handling of Music Technology. In addition to their work in class there will be numerous opportunities for music students to expand their musical horizons through extra-curricular activities, including visits and other performances. The department's practice facilities can be made available to all students, although only music and music technology students have access to dedicated workstations and studio facilities outside of lessons.

Course Structure & Content

AS:

Unit G351 Performing Music 1

Performance is assessed formally for the course each year by a visiting examiner. Each candidate has to prepare a solo recital lasting between 5 and 8 minutes. As well as this they have to perform on a second instrument, perform in a duet or ensemble or perform your own composition. The minimum Standard required is around Associated Board Grade 5 for the AS. New for 2008/9, candidates are now able to offer improvisation for assessment. It is expected that you will be having individual lessons on your main instrument or voice. Students will have opportunities to take part in group and solo performance in class and recital evenings, which help to build confidence and develop performance (and compositional) skills.

Unit G352 Composing 1

Composition involves both stylistic musical techniques (harmony) and original writing. Assessment is by a coursework portfolio submitted after the first two terms of Year 12. Compositions are required to be fully notated, and submitted with a recording and detailed commentary. Options for this module include writing a set of exercises showing knowledge of the Language of Western tonal harmony as well as writing a short composition for between 4 and 10 instruments. Students are encouraged to make use of the department's music technology facilities for both recording and composition.

Unit G353 Introduction to Historical Study in Music

The Historical Studies units have a written examination at the end of each year, and involve the study of pioneers in Classical Orchestral music (c1750-c1830) and early Jazz in the AS year.

A2:

Unit G354 Performing Music 2 (Interpretation)

Performing: a recital of 12 –15 minutes on one instrument only, played to a visiting examiner. You will give a recital as a soloist or accompanist, or in an ensemble. You will also have a 5 minute Viva Voce with the examiner.

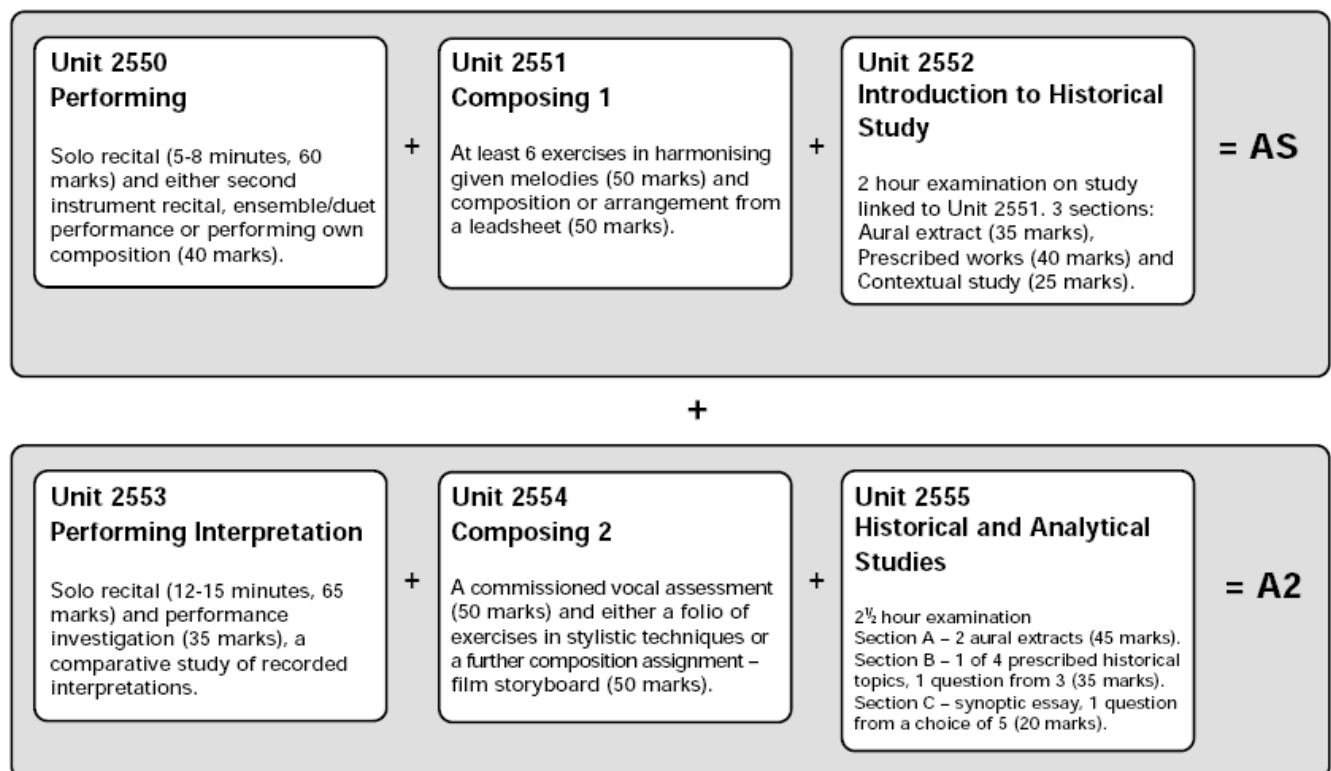
Unit G355 Composing 2

You will be asked to set to music one of two sets of words. For the rest of the course you may choose whether to study closely one style from a wide range of different ones, or whether to compose music, perhaps using Music Technology, for a film storyboard set by OCR.

Unit G356 Historical and Analytical Studies in Music

This will consist of a timed examination paper with three main sections: aural extracts, prescribed historical topic (one from four) and a synoptic essay. In preparation for the first section you will study a wide range of early 20th-century vocal music, learning about techniques of word-setting and about more advanced techniques of handling harmony and tonality. The prescribed historical topics offer you further opportunities to support your composing by listening to and studying the background to music that is relevant to it.

Assessment



Entry qualifications

The course is aimed at those who have previously attained some knowledge in music or aspects relating to it, either through a GCSE qualification or equivalent such as ABRSM Grades. Students may have also acquired suitable experience through less formal means as a performer or as an attentive listener. Whilst there is no prescribed knowledge for this course, it is recommended that students should have shown themselves capable of a level of practice and understanding equivalent to that of a grade C or above in GCSE Music. However, we are happy to accept Grade V Theory PLUS Grade V on an instrument in lieu of a C grade in GCSE Music.

Career Prospects

The course provides a sound foundation for courses in Music in higher education and employment possibilities which include the music industry, teaching and other related careers.