

MUSIC in the Sixth Form:

A Level & Extra-Curricular

Music is constantly evolving; inspiring creativity and expression in a way that no other subject can. A Level Music offers you the chance to study a wide range of musical genres. It brings listening, performance and composition to life in new and engaging ways, and links to the world around us like never before.

We know that every student has different learning styles and musical tastes, which is why A Level Music values all music styles, skills and instruments. Studying Music will broaden your minds and foster a love of all music and is a qualification that students of all abilities and backgrounds will enjoy.

For those wishing to pursue a professional musical career as a performer, composer or teacher, A Level Music is a pre-requisite for higher education courses at both universities and music colleges.

Music also creates a practical and creative balance for those studying two or more classroom or laboratory based subjects, developing independent study and cultivating interpersonal skills through the examination of music as a communicative language.

We hope you find all the information you need in this booklet. If you have any questions about the AQA specification please do get in touch.

Mr E Holmes

Head of Music

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- *Minimum course entry requirement - GCSE Music Grade 6*
 - *Also required - Grade 5 theory standard + at least Grade 5 ABRSM performance standard*
 - Awarding Body - AQA (A Level Music 7272)
 - Syllabus content is taught as three modules

Component 1: Appraising music

Listening, Analysis and Contextual understanding.

Written/Listening Examination (40% of the total A Level marks)



The Baroque Solo Concerto

Studying set works by Vivaldi, Purcell and J. S. Bach, and preparation for questions on unfamiliar related pieces.

Listen to ...

J. S. Bach: *Violin Concerto in A minor, BWV 1041*



The Operas of Mozart

Selections from various operas; solo, duet, recitative and overtures, in preparation for questions on unfamiliar pieces.

Listen to ...

W. A. Mozart: *Overture from Le Nozze di Figaro*



The Piano music of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg

Studying set works; ballades, nocturnes and intermezzi by the named composers, and preparation for questions on unfamiliar related pieces.

Listen to ...

Chopin: *Nocturne in E Minor Op. 72 No 1*



Jazz

Study of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Pat Metheny and Gwilym Simcock, in preparation for questions on unfamiliar pieces.

Listen to ...

Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five: *West End Blues*



Art Music since 1910

In depth study of Shostakovich, Messiaen and Reich, and additional information about James MacMillan for listening questions on unfamiliar related pieces, and an essay.

Listen to ...

D. Shostakovich: *Symphony no. 5 in D minor*



Please note that you will need to complete the listening grid you are given on the A Level transition day in preparation for the start of the term.

Component 2: Performance

Externally Assessed Coursework (35% of total A Level marks)

Students will record a programme of a minimum of 10 minutes of solo and/or ensemble music, in which they will demonstrate an understanding of context including, the chosen style or genre being performed and the composer's purpose and intention. The standard of repertoire performed should be above Grade 6, and to achieve the top marks, the repertoire should be above Grade 7.

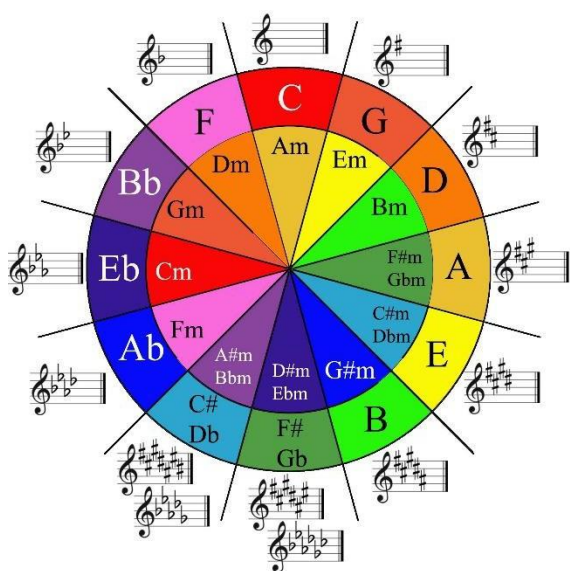


You will submit your performance as an audio recording. Try recording yourself and listening back critically to your performance whilst following the score!



Component 3: Composition

Externally Assessed Coursework. (25% of the total A Level marks)



Students will compose two compositions which must last a minimum of 4.5 minutes. One will be in response to an externally set brief and the other a free composition.

The externally set brief requires candidates to complete two harmony exercises in the 4-part chorale style of J. S. Bach. Harmonising chorales has long been held in high regard as a vital academic skill in music, but also as the groundwork for composition, allowing creative ideas to be underpinned by strong harmonic principles.

A knowledge of keys, chords and cadences is essential for composition in any style. If Grade 5 Theory was a long time ago, brush up on this knowledge. The circle of keys (see above) should be well known!



EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Durham Johnston School Music Department offers the following extra-curricular activities:

AFTER SCHOOL

- Senior Orchestra – c.80 members
- Senior Choir (SATB) – c.90 members
- Wind Band – c.50 members
- Big Band – c.15 members

LUNCHTIME

- Sixth Form Chamber Choir (SATB) – auditioned – c.30 members
- Theory Club – c.20 members working towards ABRSM Grade 5
- Keyboard Club – c.20 members
- Aural Skills – a sign-up system in preparation for ABRSM exams

All of the school groups participate in school concerts in the autumn and spring terms. The Senior Orchestra and Choirs participate in the annual school Carol Service in Durham Cathedral.

The department is also supported by a team of peripatetic instrumental/vocal staff from the Durham County Music Service.

Additional projects in the last few years have included;

- Charity Christmas Concerts
- Chamber Choir Sing Choral Evensong in Durham Cathedral
- Joint performance with Durham Singers and other musicians of Haydn's *Creation*, and Monteverdi's *Vespers*

Sixth Form musicians will be encouraged to take responsibility for elements of the department's extra-curricular programme (e.g. rehearsal set-up, taking sectionals, assisting with administration of music).

