

A Level Music

Examination board – Pearson / Edexcel	
Performing	30%
Composing	30%
Listening and Appraising	40%

Specification Outline

Component 1: Performing

- A public performance of one or more pieces, performed as a recital
- Performance can be solo, in an ensemble, improvising, or realising music through music technology
- The total performance time must be a minimum of 8 minutes and will be recorded continuously
- Music performed must be minimum grade 6 standard or equivalent
- Recitals will be recorded between March 1 and April 30th in the year of qualification
- Recitals will be externally assessed

Component 2: Composing

- A total of two compositions must be completed
- The first composition can be in response to a chosen brief from a list set by the exam board, or a free composition
- This first composition must last a minimum of 4 minutes and will carry a total of 40 marks
- The first composition must be completed by December in the year of qualification
- The second composition will be from a list of briefs assessing compositional techniques
- This must last a minimum of 1 minute and will carry a total of 20 marks
- This second composition must be completed by April in the year of the qualification
- The combined time for both compositions will be a minimum of 6 minutes
- Compositions will be externally assessed

Component 3: Listening and Appraising Exam

Application of knowledge is assessed through six areas of study:

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

Each AoS contains 3 set works

- There are two sections in the exam.
- Section A is worth 50 marks, with three questions based on extracts from the set works and one question on dictation.
- Section B is worth 50 marks, with one essay question on an unfamiliar piece of music and one essay chosen from three optional questions on a set work.
- Each student will have a CD and will be in control of listening to the extracts relating to each question.
- The exam has a duration of 2 hours and 10 minutes.

There are two set works for each Area of Study. You need to study these set works as well as listen to music other than the set works (wider listening).

You must also develop your aural perception skills.

Area of Study	Set Works
Vocal Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. S. Bach, Cantata, Ein feste Burg, BWV 80: Movements 1, 2, 8 • Vaughan Williams, On Wenlock Edge: Nos. 1, 3 and 5 (On Wenlock Edge, Is my team ploughing? and Bredon Hill)
Instrumental music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clara Wieck-Schumann, Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17: movement 1 • Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique: Movement 1
Music for Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danny Elfman, Batman Returns: Main theme (Birth of a Penguin Part II), Birth of a Penguin Part I, Rise and fall from grace, and Batman vs the Circus • Bernard Herrmann, Psycho: Prelude, The City, Marion, The Murder (Shower Scene), The Toys, The Cellar, Discovery, Finale
Popular Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate Bush, Hounds of Love: Cloudbusting, And dream of sheep, and Under ice • Beatles, Revolver: Eleanor Rigby, Here, there and everywhere, I want to tell you, and Tomorrow never knows
Fusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debussy, Estampes: Nos. 1 and 2 (Pagodes and La soirée dans Grenade) • Anoushka Shankar, Breathing Under Water: Burn, Breathing Under Water and Easy
New Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaija Saariaho, Petals for Violoncello and Live Electronics • Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring: Introduction, The Augurs of Spring, and Ritual of Abduction

Steps you should take in preparation for the start of the course in September:

1. Improve your theory knowledge, especially key signatures, scales and chords
2. Revisit general music history - Baroque, Classical, Romantic and 20th Century
3. Develop a **daily practise routine** on your instrument or voice and stick to it