



Haverhill 14-19
LearningPartnership

A-Level Music

Course information

Why choose A-Level Music?

The new Edexcel Advanced GCE Music course — simple in design but comprehensive — is intended to be stimulating and enriching for students and teachers alike.

At both Advanced Subsidiary Levels (AS) and A2, students experience all three main musical disciplines of performing, composing and listening and understanding.

Students will develop **performance** skills (solo and/or ensemble), compose music and learn about **harmony** (the basics at AS and stylistic studies at A2). They will build up their **aural** and **analytical** skills by studying selections from the *New Anthology of Music* and wider **listening**.

The full GCE course (AS plus A2) is excellent preparation for higher education courses in music, but is equally valuable for non- specialists as a second or third area of study.

The AS units alone can offer a broad and satisfying experience for those who want to conclude their musical studies at this point.

Course Outline:

UNITS AS

UNIT 1 – PERFORMING MUSIC INTERNALLY

ASSESSED

5 – 6 MINUTES as a soloist and/or part of an ensemble -any instrument/any voice.

30% (AS), 15% (full A level)

UNIT 2 – COMPOSING EXTERNALLY

ASSESSED

Create a 3 minute composition in response to a choice of briefs provided by the exam board.

Write a CD programme note describing aspects of the composition and the influences of other music on it.

30% (AS), 15% (full A level)

UNIT 3 – DEVELOPING MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING EXTERNALLY

ASSESSED

Listening to familiar music and understanding how it works.

Section A – Listening – extracts of music played and answer questions about features heard.

Section B – Investigating Musical Styles

Both these sections require study of works from an Anthology

Section C – Understanding Chords and Lines – identifying harmonic and tonal features, and then applying knowledge to completion of a short score for SATB

Use of a keyboard is allowed

ASSESSMENT - 2 hour examination

40% (AS), 20% (full A level)

A2

**UNIT 4 – EXTENDED PERFORMANCE
INTERNALLY**

ASSESSED

12 – 15 minutes of a balanced programme of music as a soloist and/or as part of an ensemble

30% (A2), 15% (full A level)

**UNIT 5 – COMPOSITION AND TECHNICAL STUDY
EXTERNALLY**

ASSESSED

SECTION 1 – COMPOSITION

Create a 3 minute composition in response to a choice of briefs provided by the exam board.

SECTION 2 – TECHNICAL STUDY

Builds on the knowledge and awareness of harmony gained in Unit 3 section C through the medium of pastiche studies.

- students complete 2 tasks set by the exam board
- *either 1 composition + 1 technical study*
- *or 2 compositions*
- *or 2 technical studies*

30% (A2), 15% (full A level)

**UNIT 6 – FURTHER MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING
EXTERNALLY**

ASSESSED

Listening to music, both familiar and unfamiliar, and understanding how it works.

Set works from the anthology provide the focus for much of this unit.

Section A – Aural analysis

Section B – Music in Context

Section C – Continuity and change in instrumental music.

40% (A2), 20% (full A level)

Resources and facilities:

THE FULL EDEXCEL SPECIFICATION

http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/103296/GCE2008_Music_Spec.pdf

RECOMMENDED WEB-SITES

<http://www.themusicland.co.uk>

BOOKS

Edited by J Winterson — *The New Anthology of Music* (Peters, 2000) (used for the Listening, aural & analysis elements of the course)

Benham H — *A Student's Guide to Harmony and Counterpoint* (Rhinegold, 2006)

Benham H and Wightman A — *Listening Tests for Students: Edexcel A2 Music Specification, Book 1* (Rhinegold, 2005)

Benham H and Wightman A — *Listening Tests for Students: Edexcel A2 Music Specification, Book 2* (Rhinegold, 2005)

Bowman D — *Rhinegold Dictionary of Music in Sound* (Rhinegold, 2000)

Cole B — *The Composer's Handbook* (Schott, 1996)

Cole B — *The Pop Composer's Handbook* (Schott, 2006)

Careers and progression:

This qualification supports progression into further education, training or employment, such as a degree in music or vocational courses such as a BTEC HND or HNC in Music.

Past students' progress:

- Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Royal Academy of Music, London College of Music, Lancaster University, Huddersfield University, Welsh College of Music & Drama, Exeter University, Anglia University, Roehampton University, Brunel University, Trinity College of Music, Kneller Hall – Armed Forces Band
- Sub-principal Cellist in Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, freelance professional trumpeter, Arts Administration, Music Education Administration, School teaching, instrumental teaching, Royal Anglian Army Band, Royal Dragoon Band.

Entry requirements:

Students who would benefit most from studying a GCE in Music are likely to have a Level 2 qualification such as a GCSE in Music at grades A*- B or a BTEC First Certificate or First Diploma in Music (Merit).

Students should be aware that performing skills need to be at the standard of Grade 5 for **AS** level, and **Grade 6** for **A2** at the time of assessment.

Edexcel Difficulty Level of Music Book:-

http://www.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/48890/web_version.pdf

A-Level Results:

100% pass rate at Samuel Ward since 1987, the most recent in 2006 – 5 students passed AS Music Grades B – D having taken the subject as a fast track twilight course with their GCSEs in Year 11.

Enquiries:

Miss J Wright – Head of Music
jwright@samuelward.suffolk.sch.uk