

Music A Level

This course extends the work of the GCSE Music course and has three linked components: Performing, Composing and Appraising. You will need to have lessons on an instrument or voice and it is expected that you will have passed Grade 5 Theory by the time you start the course.

Year 12

NO EXTERNAL EXAMINATION

You will prepare a performance consisting of a minimum of two pieces either as a soloist or as part of an ensemble or a combination of both. This will be assessed by a visiting examiner. One piece must reflect the musical characteristics of one area of study, the other is a free choice. The department will provide an accompanist if you need one and your recital will take place in Saffron Hall. There are lots of opportunities in school to develop your performance skills, either in ensemble work or as a solo recitalist.

You will submit two compositions one of which must reflect the musical techniques and conventions associated with the Western Classical Tradition and be in response to a brief set by WJEC. You will have a choice of four briefs for the first composition and the second composition is a free composition.

You will study two movements from a Classical Symphony in detail and then the group will choose one from three more popular genres for further study. These are currently *Rock and Pop*, *Musical Theatre* or *Jazz*. This component is assessed by a formal assessment lasting 1 hour and 30 minutes. Questions will include analysis of set works with a score, extended responses on a wider context, unprepared extracts of music with and without a score, and comparison questions.

Year 13

COMPONENT 1 (35% OR 25%)

Option A: Performing (35%) A performance consisting of a minimum of 3 pieces, at least one as a soloist. The others may be either as a soloist, part of an ensemble or a combination of both. One piece must reflect the musical characteristics of one area of study. At least one other piece must reflect the musical characteristics of a different area of study.

Option B: Performing (25%) A performance consisting of a minimum of 2 pieces either as a soloist, or part of an ensemble, or a combination of both. One piece must reflect musical characteristics of one area of study.

COMPONENT 2 (25% OR 35%)

Option A: Composing (25%) Two compositions, one of which must reflect the musical techniques and conventions of the Western Classical Tradition and be in response to one of four set briefs, released in September. The second is a free composition.

Option B: Composing (35%) Three compositions, one of which must reflect the musical techniques and conventions associated with the Western Classical Tradition and be in response to a brief. The second composition must reflect the musical characteristics of one different area of study; the third is a free composition.



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COMPONENT 3 (40%)

This part of the course builds on the works studied in Year 12 and adds a third element called *In to the C20* which looks at more contemporary art music. It is assessed in a formal examination that lasts for 2 hours and 15 minutes.

Skills developed

There are many transferable skills involved in the study of Music; team work, higher level thinking, concentration, independence, cultural and historical awareness, self discipline and organisation.

Links with other subjects

Most obviously with Music Tech, Drama and Film/Media Studies. However the analytical skills of History, processes in Maths and the command of language and vocabulary in English are also linked. We also utilise languages in terminology, and the study of composers!

Frequently Asked Questions ...

Why study music? *The transformative power...*

- ◆ A Georgia Tech study indicates that a student who participates in at least one college elective music course is 4.5 times more likely to stay in college than the general student population.¹
- ◆ The part of the brain responsible for planning, foresight, and coordination is substantially **larger** for instrumental musicians than for the general public.²
- ◆ Music students demonstrate less test anxiety and performance anxiety than students who do not study music.³

What about the Music Academy?

The opportunities offered by our academy dramatically enhance the course, not least in the chance to work with professional musicians in a variety of ways.

Do I have to sing?

All A-Level students are expected to join one of our choirs; they provide an essential grounding in aural and basic musicianship which is invaluable in the History and Analysis parts of the qualification.

Can I have instrument lessons in school?

Almost certainly; we employ a full range of specialist staff for this purpose.

Do Universities recognise Music as an academic subject?

Unlike some other subjects, Music is welcomed by all universities as a full academic qualification.

Can I study Music and Music Technology A-Level at SWCHS?

Yes you can.

Reading: Music: A Very Short Introduction: Nicholas Cook.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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