

SIXTH FORM PROSPECTUS

MUSIC (Edexcel)

Mrs H Williams

As with all A-level specifications, Music falls into two portions, each lasting one year: the AS and A2. The AS portion of the course can be taken without continuing to A2, however the AS is a prerequisite for admission to the A2 course.

Like the GCSE, emphasis is placed on performance, composition and aural analysis. All three areas are linked in various ways. Unlike GCSE, much of the compositional work is in the form of exercises rather than free composition. In many units an emphasis is placed on historical context and the study of printed music. Much use is made in the course of the exam board's *Anthology of Music*. Candidates are expected to purchase their own copy, at a cost of approximately £25, which they may then keep.

AS Units

These form the first year of the course. At the end of the first year candidates can choose to either continue to A2, in which case the first year is worth 50% of the final A-level grade, or convert the marks they have already achieved into an AS-level.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Unit 1 Performing | Part 1: Perform 1 or 2 solo pieces lasting 5 – 6 minutes 15% of AS-course mark. | Any instrument is acceptable – to achieve top marks, Grade 6 level is required, but anything from Grade 4 upwards is permitted. Externally assessed. |
| | Part 2: Performing during the course. 15% of AS-course mark. | A log of four performances, including at least one solo performance. One must also be a performance of one of the candidate's own compositions. Internally assessed. |
| Unit 2 Developing Musical Ideas | Part 1: Produce 2 compositional techniques exercises. 15% of AS-course mark | Two exercises from different topics, including Renaissance counterpoint, Baroque counterpoint, Minimalism, Bach chorale, 32-bar song, Serialism. Externally assessed. |
| | Part 2: Produce a composition. 15% of AS-course mark. | A composition lasting not less than 3 minutes exploring a specific topic chosen from a list including Variations, Pop song, Neoclassicism, Fusions, Film and TV. Externally assessed. |
| Unit 3 Listening and Understanding | Part 1: 45-minute listening paper. 15% of AS-course marks. | Questions on timbre, texture, tonality, harmony, comparison of performances, dictation, and historical/geographical context. Externally assessed. |
| | Part 2: 1_ hour essay paper based on study area. 25% of AS-course mark. | Two questions to be answered one on each of two areas of study chosen from the list given below. Externally assessed. |

SIXTH FORM PROSPECTUS

A2 Units

These form the second year of the course. This year is worth 50% of the final A-Level grade, the other 50% being taken from the marks achieved at the end of the first year.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Unit 4 Specialist Options | EITHER: Composition portfolio 30% of A2-course mark | Two compositions together lasting not less than 6 minutes each from one of the topics outlined in Unit 2. One must be from the same topic chosen from Unit 2. Externally assessed. |
| | OR: Recital 30% of A2 –course mark | 20-minute recital on one or more instruments. Grade 7 achieves top marks, but Grade 5 upwards is permitted. Externally assessed. |
| Unit 5 Performing and Composing | Part 1: Performing during the course 15% of A2-course mark | A log of four performances. The log must include one solo. Internally assessed. |
| | Part 2. Compositional techniques examination 15% of A2-course mark | Between one and three hours is permitted under supervised conditions for completion of the exercise, chosen from the same topics as in Unit 2. Externally assessed. |
| Unit 6 Analysing Music | Part 1: 45-minute listening paper 15% of A2-course mark | Three questions: a) Comment on style, genre etc of music without score b) Comparison of two excerpts heard without score c) Test with skeleton score. Externally assessed. |
| | Part 2: 2 hour paper based on areas of study. 25% of A2 course mark. | Five questions to be answered, three in an ‘Area of Study’ begun in the AS year, two in an Area begun in the A2 year. Externally assessed. |
| Areas of Study | These each have a number of specific works assigned to them, and in each case a special focus is also stipulated for A2. | Music for large ensemble, World Music, Sacred Vocal Music, Secular Vocal Music, Keyboard Music, Music for small ensemble, Music for Film and Television, Popular Music and Jazz, 20 th and 21 st century art music. |