

Transition programme Music AS Level

Part of the Performing and Expressive Arts
Faculty

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Monmouth | Ysgol Gyfun
Comprehensive School | Trefynwy

Welcome to the course

- We are really looking forward to working with you in our 6th form. In this powerpoint you will find tasks that will help you prepare and get up to speed for the course and generally keep your musical learning active and developing (hopefully)!! There is no pre-requisite to complete the tasks, they are there if you wish to use.

- Music at AS follows the same three strands as GCSE Music but now at a higher level. The structure of the course for year 12 is as follows.

AS (3 units)

AS Unit 1: Performing

Total duration of performances: 6-8 minutes

12% of qualification

60 marks

A performance consisting of a **minimum of two pieces either as a soloist or as part of an ensemble or a combination of both. One piece must reflect the musical characteristics of one area of study.**

AS Unit 2: Composing

Total duration of compositions: 3-6 minutes

12% of qualification

54 marks

Two compositions:

1. A piece of at least **1 minute** duration which uses the techniques associated with the Western Classical Tradition, in response to a brief set by WJEC. Learners will have a choice of **four set briefs**, released during the first week of September in the academic year in which the year in which the unit is to be assessed.
2. A free composition of at least **2 minutes** duration.

AS Unit 3: Appraising

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes (approximately)

16% of qualification

72 marks

Two areas of study:

Area of study A: **The Western Classical Tradition (Part 1)**

Either:

- **The Symphony** 1760-1830 including **one set work**, *Symphony Number 103, Drum Roll*, Haydn, Movements 1 and 2.

Or:

- **Religious Choral Music** 1730-1800 including **one set work**, *Requiem*, Mozart (*Requiem, Dies Irae, Tuba Mirum and Rex Tremendae*).

A choice of **one** area of study from:

Area of study B: **Rock and Pop** 1965-1990

Area of study C: **Musical Theatre**, Porter, Rodgers, Schönberg and Lloyd-Webber

Area of study D: **Jazz** 1940-1965.

Basic theory

- When we start the A level course we begin with a module called Starting Points in which we review basic theory through some simple composition tasks. We will go over keys, triads, dissonance etc. but we do presume some basic knowledge. On the following (external) page you should be familiar with the topics in the following sections:
- [Musictheory.net](https://www.musictheory.net)
- *The Basics* – all sections
- *Rhythm and Metre* – all sections
- *Scales and Key Signatures* – all sections
- *Intervals* – all sections
- The first two lessons from *Chords, Diatonic Chords* and the first from *Chord Progressions* would be a bonus

Music History

- Read through and listen to the material on the [Short History of Music](#) pages and then complete the following questions below.
- What is your favourite piece and why?
- Choose something about one of the other tracks that interests you (e.g. instrumentation, harmony, rhythm). Describe this aspect of the music and why you find it interesting.
- What is your least favourite track?
- Describe two aspects of this track that you think contribute to your opinion:
- If you had to compose a piece that took inspiration from one of these tracks, which one would you choose and why.
- Listen to and read about the Baroque and Classical eras on the Short History of Music on www.alevelmusic.com. Identify THREE features of music that are different at the beginning of the Classical era compared to the Baroque.
- Listen to and read about the Romantic period on the Short History of Music on www.alevelmusic.com. Then do some of your own research on a Romantic composer of your choice. Write a short biographical paragraph about the composer, explaining how they are typically Romantic.

Listening and describing

- As in GCSE we will need to get really good at describing music using appropriate technical terms.
- I would like you to review all the terms in the [GCSE Glossary](#), which should be familiar from GCSE. Make sure you understand them, follow all the links and listen to the examples.
- Make your own notes as you go.

Composing

- Can you write a pentatonic piece, taking the extract below as inspiration? You can read the [notes here](#) to help you if you wish. Write for any combination of instruments.
- Think about composers that influence you.

Performing

- Make sure you don't neglect your playing during this break. If you are having online lessons with your teacher, then that will obviously keep you going. If you are not, I suggest you do at least some of the tasks below to keep yourself in practice.
- polish up a piece you are already working on and video it. You could then share it with your friends and family. If you want to get ahead of the game send it to me at amy.ritter@Monmouth.schools.edu.org.uk. You might find a recorded accompaniment on Youtube for pieces that are very regularly played for grades etc.
- resurrect an older piece that you really enjoyed. You will be able to play it better now you are a bit more advanced. Listen to some performances of the piece on Apple Music/Spotify/Youtube. What do you like about these performances? Is there anything you can incorporate. Again, you could video your performance.
- look at the graded lists for the level at which you are currently playing, you will find graded lists on the internet. Listen to the pieces and choose one to learn from scratch. You can use recorded performances to help you learn the piece and decide how to play it.

Really useful online free resources

- Some really simple explanations of basic music theory building blocks at [12tone](#), Starts with some ludicrously basic stuff but moves on to go over basics that you might be rusty on.
- Good basic introduction to [the symphony by Howard Goodall](#) from the BBC
- A much [longer video on the symphony](#) by Howard Goodall (this is the first of a series)
- An [introduction to Debussy](#), again from Howard Goodall at the BBC
- Anything on the [LSO Youtube Playlist](#)
- During the COVID 19 lockdown you can access [archived Berlin Philharmonic concerts](#) – amazing!
- Lloyd Webber is streaming his musicals free on Friday nights on [theshowsmustgoon](#)
- And here is a massive list of [performing arts stuff you can access from home](#) during lockdown. Most of it free or very cheap.
- Composition task from [Passing Notes](#) free during lockdown by using the code COVID19

Extension Tasks

- If you are looking for other things to keep you busy, pick a selection from the following tasks.
- **Reading**
- Sion, Colborne, Gardiner, Pankhurst et al (2017) *Eduqas AS and A Level Music Study Guide*, London: Rhinegold ([Amazon link](#)) [covers the background information needed for the course – useful but not essential to read before the A level starts,] Although we study WJEC there is a cross over of topics and work.
- Winterson and Harris (2014) *Music Theory: The Essential Guide* London: Faber ([Amazon link](#)) [if your basic theory is a bit ropy then this is good for making sure you know up to Grade 5 theory stuff]

Research Tasks

- Research the life and music Franz Josef Haydn. You can use the [Oxford Music Online Haydn](#), [Haydn Wikipedia article](#), [Classic FM](#), [Philharmonia Haydn introduction](#), [Naxos](#), [BBC introduction](#), [BBC Composer of the Week](#) and [Howard Goodall on Haydn](#). You can then present your work in any way you like. Online, as a poster, a booklet or a leaflet.
- Research the biographies and key works of any of the following musical theatre composers: Richard Rodgers, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, Claude-Michel Schonberg, Andrew Lloyd-Webber or Stephen Schwartz.