

KS5 Curriculum: A Level Music (Edexcel)

In Music we aim to nurture and inspire enquiring and creative minds. Alongside delivering the course content for the Edexcel A Level specification, we continue the journey from KS3 and GCSE in teaching students *'how Music works'*. This takes place in a number of ways through listening, discussing, writing, rehearsing, performing, composing, arranging, analysing, reproducing, developing, reworking, and reimagining. Students learn how to identify musical features by ear, how understanding what's happening in a piece of music can inform our performance practice, how to spot musical features in scores, and how to use them when improvising, composing and arranging. Students understanding of the elements deepens considerably, and our exploration of repertoire widens significantly. At A level we research and discuss provenance with greater depth; the time place and purpose of music, where composers' ideas come from, who taught them who influenced their works, who they went on the influence. We find out about the ground breakers and the mavericks, from those who uphold conventions to those who challenge our understanding of what Music is.

Performing, arranging, rehearsing, directing, coaching, mentoring and composing for other musicians beyond the classroom are some of the ways in which students can become part of our school community. Taking part in public performances provides invaluable experience in real-world situations, adding to curriculum knowledge and inspiring post-18 paths. Alongside Music Technology students, A Level musicians are provided with every opportunity become part of a thriving part of Huntington's Music family and to form mature working relationships and lifelong friendships.

We take university, conservatoire and career aspirations seriously, making sure that every student is aware of the ever-increasing number of ways they can engage both professionally and/or as a skilled amateur musician, for the rest of their lives.

How can parents help?

30% of this course is performance. The required playing standard to begin the course is around grade 5. To access top grades, students need to be around grade 8 by the Spring term of year 13. Instrumental tuition is costly. If you need support in providing instrumental tuition for your son/daughter, then please do get in touch and we will do our very best to help find a solution. Regular and meaningful instrumental/vocal practice is an essential part of making good progress at any stage of musician's development, but it is particularly important at A level. We will work with students in the first half term in setting up good practice habits when working at home. You can really help us by checking in on practice patterns. At this level practice should be daily and for at least 40 minutes.

You can get involved with developing your child's 'A level' thinking by asking questions about the provenance of what they're playing/singing. Who wrote it? When was it written? What kind of musician was it written for? What else did this composer write? Is this piece typical of their work? What does the title mean or evoke? Whereabouts in the world is this music from? Is the music reflecting a specific musical culture? Has it been influenced by a range of musical cultures?

You can also help us by encouraging your child to get involved with as many co-curricular opportunities as possible. In addition to teacher run ensembles and events, we encourage Musicians to be mentors in our 'Paired instruments' scheme, support lower school and GCSE music lessons, run rehearsals, form their own ensembles, and help organise, as well as take part in Music events at school.

Beyond school there is a wealth of opportunities available in the city (choirs, orchestras, bands) and a number of our students have played in national ensembles such as the [National Youth Orchestra](#), [National Youth Jazz](#) and [National Children's Orchestra](#).

Follow Huntington Music Department on Twitter [@HuntSchoolMusic](#) and encourage your child to use our department website <https://huntschoolmusic.com/> to access our latest resources.

Homework

In addition to daily instrumental/vocal practice, we recommend that students undertake 2-3 hours of homework tasks.

These take the form of:

1. Listening, research, and analysis tasks.
2. Written harmony exercises.
3. Aural training, sight singing (join a couple of our choirs)
4. Composition exercises and work on composition coursework.

It is also highly recommended that A Level Music students take part in and lead co-curricular music making across the school's Music community.

Feedback & Assessment

Assessments are designed to support students to make progress towards exam board requirements. Students receive feedback throughout the course in the following ways:

Component 1: Performing

In year 13, students draw together material for their final recital performance (8 mins). In Year 12, feedback on performances happens live in the room (**verbal**) and in **written** form via teams when students submit recordings. The more than students can perform live he better. The exam board requires that the final recital is a public performance. Building resilience and manging nerves is crucial in the preparation for this occasion.

Component 2: Composing

In year 12 students are set a number of composition exercises and longer composition briefs for which they will receive regular **verbal** feedback. In the initial stages composition exercises are discussed as a group and peer and teacher **verbal** feedback is often offered focussing on successes and areas for improvement. As we move into working on longer composition briefs, one to one **verbal** feedback is offered frequently (typically weekly or fortnightly).

Component 2: Stylistics (4 part SATB exercise)

In our weekly 'harmony' lessons student receive live **verbal** feedback as we work together in tackling each week's harmonic 'puzzle'. This is followed up with extended learning exercises, sometimes weekly, sometimes fortnightly. Students take a screenshot of this work, submit it on teams and receive **written annotated** feedback via email. We follow up with more **verbal** feedback in the lesson that follows. For tests and exams, students receive both **written annotated** feedback and **verbal** feedback.

Component 3: Appraising

In our twice weekly 'set works and wider listening' lessons students receive live **verbal** feedback as they practice verbalizing their thoughts. This is followed up with extended learning exercises, sometimes weekly, sometimes fortnightly. This may be a piece of listening, research and/or written work. Feedback on listening and research is given **verbally** in lessons. If the task takes the form of written work, students take a screenshot of it, submit it on teams and receive **written annotated** feedback via email. We follow up with more **verbal** feedback in the lesson that follows. For tests and exams, students receive both **written annotated** feedback and **verbal** feedback.

Music A Level – Year 12 overview (Component 1 – Performing - ongoing)

	Component 2 – Composing (2ppc)	Component 2 – SATB 4pt harmony (2ppc)	Component 3 – Listening & Analysing (4ppc)
Autumn 1	<p>Compositional Devices Development of analytical skills through the hands-on exploration of common compositional devices. Drawing on and expanding the ‘wider listening’ of units 1 and 3 we examine how composers’ make use of the pedal note, ostinato, harmonic and melodic sequence, modes and scales, canon, imitation, and circle of 5ths modulation. Students complete exercises based on each of these devices to build on their experience at GCSE.</p>	<p>Keys, scales, basic triads recap from GCSE. Key relationships. Writing for 4 voices SATB – 3 notes but 4 singers what do you double? Spacing of voices, ranges for voices. Visual presentation of 4 voices on 2 staves (stems up, stems down).</p>	<p>What can you hear? Waking up rusty musical ears... Reminders and revision of elements and vocab basics. DRSCHMITT. How to follow a score. How to research. How to listen analytically. How to annotate. How to work collaboratively. Instrumental Music AOS 2 Provenance and what we know about the last 1000 years of music. Genre v style. Solo v small scale v large scale. Professional v amateur music making. Structure, melody and timbre.</p>
Autumn 2	<p>Generating Ideas Discussions and hands-on exploration of some of the ways in which composers generate and develop ideas, making further links to wider listening. In this half term we take a look at leitmotif, cyphers, thematic development, retrograde, inversion, augmentation, diminution, aleatoricism, improvisation and approaches to variation.</p>	<p>Adjacent chord relationships V and I, basic root positions only. Parallel 5ths 8ves. Dos and don’ts of moving between voices, thinking about your singers (idiomatic writing). Inversion chords and approach chords.</p>	<p>Vocal Music AOS 1 Structure, melody, texture, timbre, harmony and tonality. Sacred v secular. Catholic v Protestant. Folk/Pop v ‘Art’. J S Bach and the cantata. V Williams, Ravel and the ‘Art’ song/ lied How to write a musical sentence. Where to start with wider listening. How to write a musical sentence.</p>
Spring 1	<p>Arranging Skills Exploration of how composers deploy forces and arrange material. We look at how instruments and voices are combined in different styles and genres – some conventional, some not so conventional. We explore the timbral possibilities of different playing techniques and some of the ways in which composer use technology to realise their ideas. Links to set works / wider listening.</p>	<p>Dominant 7ths. Who what where when. Delayed dominant 7ths. Supertonic 7ths. Prepare Sound Resolve. Minim cadences. Range of solutions, approaches. Park that and practice it in a range of keys. Model cadences superpack and dos and don’ts to date.</p>	<p>New Directions AOS 6 Structure, melody, timbre, harmony, tonality, rhythm, pulse, metre. Provenance, communication, changing landscapes. Isms. Revolution v evolution. Music and Dance – the ballet score. Music and technology – ‘Art Music’ and recorded sound, manipulating sound, musique concrete The ways in which music is represented visually. Artists who challenge our perception of what Music is? Stravinsky and Diaghilev. Prelest. Saariaho and IRCAM. How to draw wider listening into a sentence to support your point.</p>
Spring 2	<p>Short Composition Briefs Exploration of how to research, analyse and respond to short composition briefs. Real-world context e.g. music for theatre, advertising, film, special occasion. An opportunity for students to start drawing together skills in deploying compositional devices, developing ideas and arranging.</p>	<p>Modulation. Bach’s kaleidoscopic world. Analysing chorale melodies from Riemenschneider. Mapping out home key relationships. The role of the cadence in modulation. ‘Can I go V-I? Can I go to V? If I can’t go to either I’m in the wrong key’ Types of modulation: A – gradual modulation, 2 types expressed and implied; B – abrupt; C – transient. Pivot chords.</p>	<p>Popular Music and Jazz AOS 4 Structure, timbre, melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm, pulse, metre, texture. Provenance (commercial music and recorded sound, amplification) Beatles and George Martin: Abbey Road and experimental recording techniques Bush: The self taught musician with the home studio. Pine: Jazz and Hip-hop/Rap/Pop fusion. When is a cover an original work of art? Reading chord charts. Score v transcription. Improvisation v composition. Radio edit v concept album. When do Pop and Jazz become Art Music? Famous combinations/fusion. Opening paragraphs for Q6. Structuring Q6.</p>
Summer 1	<p>Longer Composition Briefs Exploration of extended composition briefs by working with tasks from previous years and considering how we might frame our responses. Importance of research, wider listening, analytical listening, metacognitive approaches (e.g. planning, monitoring and evaluating), discussion of composition process, strategies and motivation.</p>	<p>Modulation. What am I gaining? It’s always positive – the critical necessity of accidentals to indicate modulation. Gradual modulation practice. Expressed modulation practice. Implied modulation practice. Mapping out home key relationships. ‘Don’t touch the queen’. Basses are melodic. Be kind and gentle to altos and tenors.</p>	<p>Fusions AOS 5 Isn’t everything a fusion? Famous fusions. Structure, timbre, melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm, pulse, metre, texture, comp devices. Debussy: Impressionism, Exoticism and the Paris exhibition 1899 Indonesian Gamelan – provenance, forces, structures, textures, function. Spanish music influenced by Morocco, N Africa and the history of the Moors in Spain and Portugal. Shankar: Indian classical music structures, forces, traditions and similarities to Jazz. Jazz and Hip-hop/Rap/Pop fusion. Writing techniques bringing in the 2 or more facets of a fusion. How Q5 works. How Q1-3 work.</p>
Summer 2	<p>Full scale composition Students begin the process of creating, adapting or continuing ideas taken from the briefs explored in Summer 1 as the basis for a full scale composition. This may be the basis of their final submission (free composition), but students will also have the choice to work with one of the exam board set briefs, released at the start of year 13.</p>	<p>Exam. Review. Minor keys – doubling the third, chord VI, II is now a diminished chord. Writing in the leading note. Park that and practice approaches and cadences in minor keys. Unusual cadences – the ‘Wenceslas cadence’, echapees, anticipation of the tonic, dotted rhythms, passing notes various in the melody, and how to deal with them. The chord before the approach. The passing 6/4 and the all new VIIb (yes.... chord VII). Cadential suspension with II7b and IIb. Clashes of interest when it comes to resolving dissonance.</p>	<p>Exam. Review. Film Music AOS 3 Structure, timbre, melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm, pulse, metre, texture, comp devices. Writing to a brief. Provenance, industry around the world. The difference music makes in a film. Absolute v Programmatic music. Herrmann and Hitchcock: using 1 orchestral family, the ostinato – or ‘how to make a lot of stuff from very little’. Elfman and Tim Burton – the fantasy film/the superhero film and the modern film orchestra revival. Round up of the year. Plan for the Summer holidays.</p>

Music A Level – Year 13 overview (Component 1 – Performing – recorded in the Autumn term – time for conversations/coaching/analysis and fixes in time for the Spring term.)

	Component 2 – Composing (2ppc)	Component 2 – SATB 4pt harmony (2ppc)	Component 3 – Listening & Analysing (4ppc)
Autumn 1	<p>Composition Briefs Exploration of the six briefs set by the exam board through research, wider listening, workshops. This is done alongside the planning and preparation necessary for students to undertake their final submission. Analysis of mark scheme and conversations around how the learning and experience gained in year 12 should inform how students go about the composition process. Time line of events and deadlines discussed to support students' time management.</p>	<p>Chord vocabulary review. What works where. Combos to avoid. Combos to use. How figured bass works. Modulation practice using whole phrases. What chords to choose to fill the rest in? It's not easy. Anacrusis openings – V7d-Ib, Vb-I, I-I. UPN, APN, Suspensions and 'Harmony Notes' – who what where when. If there's more than one choice of key to be in for a cadence how do you choose? The bigger picture. Beautiful basslines. Passing 6/4 becomes VIIb Harmony notes and non cadential suspensions Practice in context.</p>	<p>Same again but twice the speed so... Instrumental Music AOS 2 AND Film AOS 3 in 6 weeks. Filling out missing elements and drawing in wider listening. Q6. Making connections. Improving writing quality. Q1-3 skeleton score training begins. Q5 Training for unfamiliar Instrumental Music AND Film – a 'how to' on collecting material at speed with ears only and drawing in wider listening. Getting the Q5 recipe locked into writing styles and referencing. How to write about the composers' intentions. Introduction of the 'A-Z of adjectives'. Big picture thinking on the diff between absolute and programmatic music. How instrumental music relates to film scores and why we seem to want to make everything 'tell a story'.</p>
Autumn 2	<p>Composition Completion Students continue to work on composition for final submission. Discussion of work in progress and feedback, in line with specification conditions, offered throughout the half term. Draft 1 completed by Christmas.</p>	<p>Passing 6/4 becomes VIIb Harmony notes and non cadential suspensions Practice in context. Decoration – accented passing note or suspension? Passing notes, harmony notes, suspensions practice. Opening phrases I-Ib, Vb-I, I-Vb-I More detail on suspension 4-3, 9-8, 7-6, double suspensions</p>	<p>Vocal Music AOS 1 AND Pop and Jazz AOS 4. Q6 Filling out missing elements and drawing in wider listening. Making connections. Q1-3 what has to be heard live, what can be prepared in advance. Q5 Training for unfamiliar Vocal Music AOS 1 AND Pop and Jazz AOS 4 – shaping sentences and refinement of the 'A to Z or adjectives'.</p>
Spring 1	<p>Composition Completion Students continue to work on selected brief or own brief/free composition for final submission. Discussion of work in progress and feedback, in line with specification conditions, offered throughout. Final draft completed by end of half term.</p>	<p>Opening phrase practice. Minor Chorales. Phrygian cadences. Tierce de Picardie. Wenceslas cadence. Vertical and horizontal handling of harmonic and melodic minors. Anticipation of the tonic at cadences. Anacrusis starts. Make my boring phrase interesting. Doubling the 3rd in contrary motion. Rising melodic minor in the bass line. Practice in context.</p>	<p>New Directions AOS 6 AND Fusions AOS 5. Filling out missing elements and drawing in wider listening. Making connections. Q1-3 How to use prior knowledge to inform 'live decisions'. Q5 Training for unfamiliar New Directions AOS 6 AND Fusions AOS 5. How to write an opening paragraph which acknowledges the question, expresses your initial thoughts. All works visited for a second time by Feb half term.</p>
Spring 2	<p>Score Preparation and Final Recordings Modelling and exploration of the different ways in which students might chose to present their work visually. This will be shaped around students' choices of styles, genres, use of music technology, use of extended techniques etc. Students work on chose score style. Modelling and support of final audio mixdowns. Post composition submission: Melodic dictation to support unit 3 question 4 and internalisation of thematic material to support questions 1,2,3 and 6 in unit 3.</p>	<p>Mid chorale phrases and their relationship with keys. Beautiful bass lines part II. Unusual cadences, and how not be put off. Picking up from a phrase that has already been started for you on an exam paper. Full thing attempt. Review and reminders of the fundamentals. Beautiful bass lines part III.</p>	<p>Time question 6 practice with notes, annotated anths, blan anths, sound, without sound, with nothing. Skeleton scores – each AOS in turn. Examination of different types of questions. Prior knowledge versus using your ears live. Managing your time – you are in control. Scanning scores for obvious devices. Know your structure, genres, dates, provenance. Practice answering questions together/alone. Practice writing questions.</p>
Summer 1	<p>Post composition submission: Melodic dictation to support unit 3 question 4 and internalisation of thematic material to support questions 1,2,3 and 6 in unit 3.</p>	<p>After this point in the course, we look at endless scenarios and gnarly problems. As we bump into gnarly problems, we learn new tricks and set pieces to get us out of a tricky situation – like the I-Ib-IV-IVb solution for sop lines that don't move. Exam (open paper) taken in between April 1st and May 1st.</p>	<p>'Wider' wider listening covering things we haven't examined to enrich Q5 and 6 answers eg Jazz styles, 20th orchestral music, the avant garde, process music, electronic music, Baroque instrumental music, fusions of art and pop, art and jazz, etc. Unfamiliar instruments/genres/styles/playing techniques. The big 'isms' of the 20th and the influence of dissemination and commercialisation of recorded sound in the 20th and 21st centuries. Running through is a continuation of writing at speed under controlled conditions.</p>
Summer 2	<p>Revision</p>	<p>Exam already done.</p>	<p>Bullet spot checks. Reference checks. Hole filling. Exam strategies. Exam.</p>