

JCoSS

A-Level Music – Pearson Edexcel

Overview

This is an exciting and in-depth course which provides plenty of opportunity to progress as a musician in a variety of areas. The course explores a range of disciplines including: Performance, musical history and theory and compositional practices. The course can lead you on to higher education at both university or conservatoire level. It is a varied course which will complement many level 3 courses and is a well-regarded and accepted A-Level into university and industry.

Component 1: Performing (30%)	A public performance of one or more pieces, played as solo or ensemble, totalling a minimum of 8 minutes .
Component 2: Composing (30%)	Two compositions. The first is free choice, or to a chosen brief, the second is technical composition set to a brief provided by Pearson.
Component 3: Appraising (40%)	A written exam exploring the musical language, context and elements of 18 set works from 6 areas of study.

Specification link:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/Music/2016/Specification%20and%20sample%20assessments/Pearson_Edexcel_Level_3_Advanced_GCE_in_Music_9MU0_specification.pdf

Reading List

To support you in the transition from KS4 to KS5 here is a list of helpful material to read, watch and listen to prior to the course starting. These are suggestions and certainly not an exhaustive list. Please let us know if you find any resources which have been particularly useful to you. Ones in bold are particularly useful.

Reading		
Edexcel AS and A Level Music Study Guide	ISBN 9781785581694	A guide for all components, including an analysis of each set work
Writing About Music Workbook	ISBN 9781906178383	A guide about analysing and discussing music in depth.

History of Music (Cambridge Assignments in Music)	ISBN-10: 0521336813	A guide to the periods of music and recognition of styles and characteristics.
ABRSM: THE AB GUIDE TO MUSIC THEORY, PART I	ISBN 9781854724465	A useful book containing detailed information on different theoretical elements of music. Perfect if you are working towards grade 5 theory.
Heinemann Advanced Music Student Book	ISBN-10: 0435812580	An excellent book covering all aspects of the course including appraising, composing and performance.
Harmony in Practice (ABRSM), Anna Butterworth	ISBN-10: 1854728334	A thorough explanation of harmonic practices. Perfect to support composing and chorale writing.
Aural Matters - A Student's Guide to Aural Perception at Advanced Level	ISBN-10: 0946535221	A guide to aural training. Recognising and identifying musical elements in a variety of styles.
How music works by John Powell	ISBN-10: 1846143152	A book to help you understand how music is put together, without needing all of the technical vocab.
The story of Music – Howard Goodall. He also did Howard Goodall's Big bangs	ISBN-10: 0099587173	Books linked to a really good series – links to the videos are below.
Music: A Very Short Introduction by Nicholas Cook	ISBN-10: 0192853821	A short, clear and concise intro to music and the periods.
A History of Film Music – M.Cooke	ISBN-10: 0521010489	A comprehensive guide to film music from the start.

Understanding Popular Music - R.Shuker	ISBN-10: 1138907855	A comprehensive guide to pop music and its place in society.
The Rest is Noise - A.Ross	ISBN-10: 1841154768	A fascinating book about music in the 21 st Century.

Useful websites

Ones in bold are particularly useful.

Useful websites and Online Resources	
http://www.choraleguide.com/	An excellent tool explaining all the aspects of Bach chorales.
https://www.classicfm.com/	Lots of information on different composers, periods and styles of music.
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006tnxf	Composer of the week.
www.teoria.com	A great aural skills site but also has some theory work to go alongside.
www.good-ear.com	Fantastic website to try and develop your aural skills and you can test yourself.
https://www.ted.com/playlists/browse?topics=music	Ted talks on many different areas of music.
https://www.sfsymphony.org/Discover-the-Music/Listen-to-Podcasts/Program-Notes-Series	Series by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra

Films and documentaries to watch

Psycho (1960)	AoS3 Set Work
Batman (1992)	AoS3 Set Work

The story of Music – Howard Goodall.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVgPm-Kji5g all 6 available on youtube
Howard Goodall's Big bangs	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOuHKlpkOmE Also, each episode currently available on youtube
A playlist of all the set works	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5y6XDFHU4m5xRZYd4lb7ciK1JLfr5NPe
LSO Discovery series – overview of medieval to Baroque	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WH1kAvS_9BQ
LSO discovery series – Classical to Romantic	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ft5Z08BTbiY
LSO discovery series – 20 th Century	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnvf0R9ye9U

Transition tasks

There are lots of options and things for you to start thinking about, some of the key ones are highlighted.

Performance

1. Finesse a piece you know how to play well. Focus on expression and interpretation
2. Start to learn a new piece with an emphasis on accuracy and fluency
3. Perform a piece you know well and see how stylistic you can make it; know the features of the style in which you are playing
4. Record yourself performing a piece you are familiar with. Analyse it critically with what you did well and what you need to improve
5. Listen to a performance online. What makes a successful performance other than

accuracy and fluency?

Composition

1. Write a composition using one pitch. For example, only use B but you are permitted to use different octaves.
2. Take the following chord progression. Make the triads more complex by adding notes (e.g. sus4, 7th) and create a rhythm to play the chords to. Am G C F
3. Create a 4-bar leitmotif on any instrument to represent a character from Greek / Roman mythology (Zeus, Hera, Hephaestus etc). Write a short paragraph explaining the musical features used to depict that character
4. Explore various ranges, techniques, and characteristics of your first instrument. Can you create something interesting and unusual to exploit these characteristics of your instrument?
5. Read the following blog: <https://manwaringmusic.blog/2020/04/02/composing-at-home-1/>

Appraisal

1. Create a timeline for the periods of music including composers and dates. Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th Century
Example: <https://edu.glogster.com/glog/music-historytimeline/2bk3brdh6pu?glogpedia-source>
 2. Choose a composer, a piece by that composer and listen to it. Why do you enjoy this piece? What musical features make it so satisfying? Give the composer, title of the piece, era of music e.g. Baroque.
 3. Argue the following question: "What's the point of having music in a film?" Provide relevant musical examples of film music and come to some conclusion at the end of your writing. Aim to write a side of A4.
 4. Stockhausen said all music which is tonal (i.e. in a particular major or minor key) has already been written and that he would end up merely repeating music which had already been composed. To what extent do you think all tonal music has already been composed and we are merely repeating what already exists?
 5. 'Popular music deserves more recognition and is equal to Classical music'. Discuss and provide relevant musical examples.
 6. Complete a grade 5 theory paper <https://gb.abrsm.org/en/theory2018/freepractice-materials/> use the ABRSM guide to music theory to support this.
 7. Below is a list of our set works. I would like you to choose one from each area of study, and complete a DR SMITH analysis of on the page below.
- Musical Listening Exercise

Area of study	Set works
Vocal Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. S. Bach, Cantata, Ein feste Burg, BWV 80: Movements 1, 2, 8 • Vaughan Williams, On Wenlock Edge: Nos. 1, 3 and 5 (On Wenlock Edge, Is my team ploughing? and Bredon Hill)
Instrumental Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clara Wieck-Schumann, Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17: movement 1 • Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique: Movement I
Music for Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danny Elfman, Batman Returns: Birth of a Penguin Parts I and II, Batman vs the Circus, The Rise and Fall from Grace • Bernard Herrmann, Psycho: Prelude, The City, Marion, The Murder (Shower Scene), The Toys, The Cellar, Discovery, Finale
Popular Music and Jazz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate Bush, Hounds of Love: Cloudbusting, And dream of sheep, and Under ice • Beatles, Revolver: Eleanor Rigby, Here, there and everywhere, I want to tell you, and Tomorrow never knows • Courtney Pine, Back in the Day: Inner state (of mind), Lady Day and (John Coltrane), and Love and affection
Fusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debussy, Estampes: Nos. 1 and 2 (Pagodes and La soirée dans Grenade) • Anoushka Shankar, Breathing Under Water: Burn, Breathing Under Water and Easy
New Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaija Saariaho, Petals for Violoncello and Live Electronics • Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring: Introduction, The Augurs of Spring, and Ritual of Abduction