

## KS4 – GCSE (OCR)

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Throughout Year 10 and 11, GCSE Music students develop their skills in performing, composing and listening / appraising. All areas are covered in every term with a slightly different focus each time.

In Year 10 we start with a recap of the skills developed throughout KS3. We draw from the KS3 curriculum the skills and topics that will be developed in KS4. The skills include performing, composing, listening and appraising and the topics include ballads, film music and rock anthems. The students' learning at KS4 will be based on the core knowledge covered in KS3 and will be developed to include the depth required for GCSE.

The focus for our listening work for the first term is film music and 'Conventions of Pop' (Rock 'n Roll, Rock Anthems, Ballads and Solo Artists). Many of these areas are developing knowledge from Year 9 by including concepts such as tonality, chord progressions and transposition and a developed bank of vocabulary linked to the elements of music (for example texture, rhythm and tempo, structure, dynamics) required for the GCSE listening exam. Students will learn facts about each of the different styles of music; performers, contexts and key characteristics and develop the ability to write extended answers expanding their use of musical vocabulary. The assessments will model the exam style questions from the GCSE Listening paper.

Composition lessons will cover a revision of the basic building blocks of composition from KS3. Though the analysis of important examples from the different styles, students learn to identify the key compositional features of each style and learn how to base their compositions on key characteristics found within each style. Students will produce more complex pieces made possible through a greater understanding of more complex compositional techniques (such as melodic devices, extended structures and modulation) and will be encouraged to compose for their own instrument (which includes the voice). Students also analyse previous GCSE students' work in order to gain a greater understanding of the requirements of the composition coursework, focusing on high scoring GCSE techniques and the marking criteria of the exam board. Term one will require the students to compose a piece based on a brief given by the teacher demonstrating more complex techniques. Most students will use Ableton to sequence their compositional ideas however students are able to compose for their own instrument or any live instrument.

Performance skills will start with a variety of ensemble pieces as the students get to know each other as musicians, exploring different genres and combinations of instruments. One of the two performances finally submitted as coursework will be an ensemble (group) piece and the way the students communicate with the other performers is part of the assessment criteria and essential to the success of any musician in any ensemble. By the end of term, all students will have rehearsed a number of ensemble pieces in lessons, developing their understanding of the performance requirements at GCSE and will have submitted both a solo performance and their ensemble composition as a baseline assessment. The skills involved in ensemble work are of benefit beyond GCSE; for any future music they may choose to develop and also in any workplace requiring group work.

Term two in Year 10 focuses on a new genre not previously studied at KS3; Concerto through Time. Students will begin the journey in the Baroque period and will learn about composers and compositions that were written for one or more soloists with a group of instrumentalists or orchestra

accompanying them. They will learn about different compositional techniques, composers' use of tonality, instrumental techniques and a bank of vocabulary linked to this period and style of music such as concerto grosso, ripieno and basso continuo. Through this unit students will also improve their ability to read and use music notation, which is a crucial skill when preparing for the written exam and is proven to be a challenging area of musical understanding. The main area to develop is the application of their music notation understanding in activities such as rhythmic and melodic dictation and score reading, all required skills for the listening exam but not covered in the KS3 curriculum.

Students will also submit a more complex GCSE standard composition demonstrating a development of their initial ideas and a second performance (solo or ensemble). This second performance is selected by the students based on their understanding of the requirements for the course and the level of difficulty they are able to tackle. Support and guidance are given as and when required by class teachers and by the students' instrumental or vocal teachers.

After Easter the Concerto journey continues into the Classical period and students will learn how developments in technology have enabled instruments to improve and new instruments to emerge, thus allowing composers a greater range of resources at their disposal. Most notable of all being the invention of the piano, marking the end of the harpsichord era. This knowledge of the context of the different periods of music will support the development of their wider general musical knowledge and is required as part of the GCSE listening paper. They will learn about the changes in compositional techniques used and they will perform extracts from famous concertos using their own instruments where relevant.

Their performance skills will also be developed through their selection, rehearsal and performance of an ensemble piece of their choice, submitted before the end of the summer term. None of the performances are required to be linked to an area of study. In composition they will submit a second, developed composition but this time, they will include a commentary which requires the students to be able to describe the thought process behind their composition, the style they have used as their starting point and the compositional techniques and elements of music they have included. This will also support their analysis skills linked to the listening paper and is also a requirement of the composition coursework to provide a supporting commentary for their compositions. It will equally enhance their future appreciation of any music genre as they go through life.

In Year 11 we begin the year with a focus on a new topic; Rhythms of the World. We start with the areas more familiar to the students which are Samba and African Music; studied (in less depth) in Year 7, and introduce two new topics - Calypso and Bhangra. Through listening and practical activities, students develop their knowledge from KS3 and learn more about the context of each of the styles, performers, instruments and musical characteristics. We interleave this new learning with revision of the topics covered in Year 10; Conventions on Pop, Film Music and Concerto Through Time.

Students are also set the task of selecting suitable performance pieces for their solo and ensemble assessments and begin to practise them. We aim to complete many of the recordings by Christmas of Year 11, leaving students free to then focus on composition and the listening paper for the rest of the year.

The first term in Year 11 also marks the launch of the exam set brief for the second composition. This task requires the students to compose a piece of music from a choice of starting points; a rhythm, chord pattern, melody, scene for a film for example. Throughout Year 10, students will have responded to given, different starting points in their composition lessons in preparation for this task in Year 11. The brief also identifies the purpose of the piece and the context of the performance of the composition e.g. a piece that can be performed in a school concert. By the end of the Christmas term, students are encouraged to submit both compositions; the first composition being an improved version of the one submitted at the end of Year 10, and the second will be the initial ideas created as a response to the exam set brief issued in September. This allows them to take every opportunity to develop and improve their compositions by receiving feedback against the exam criteria.

After the Mocks in December, we focus on the remaining areas of study; World Music (Israeli, Palestinian, Greek and Classical Indian) and the Romantic period of Concerto Through Time. Again, these are interleaved with the previous areas of study and connections are made between the different styles. Based on an analysis of the mock exam results, listening lessons will become more bespoke, addressing gaps or misunderstanding highlighted by the mock. Students will listen to examples of the different styles of music linked to the different areas of study, perform extracts from key pieces and explore the styles through compositional tasks, this aims to embed students theoretical knowledge through practical tasks. Although not assessed, the performance and compositional elements of these 'listening' lessons will provide a practical understanding of the different styles. This aims to embed the key characteristics of each style and make the knowledge more memorable. Past papers will also guide the students towards the expectations of the exams, and lessons and activities will be targeted according to an analysis of students' previous tests and past papers.

In the final full term of Year 11 students complete their composition portfolio (Composition 1 - in a style of their own choice and Composition 2 which is composed in response to the set brief issued in September of Year 11 ) and accompanying commentaries. Any final performances are also completed. Once the composition portfolio and performances are submitted, the final 40% of the course is sat in the listening exam in the June series of Year 11.