

## Year 9

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During year 9 we aim not only to prepare students for GCSE and BTEC music but to also enable every student to study composition and performance in more depth, expanding their creative skills, their confidence, their ability to practice by being resilient and overcoming challenging tasks, successfully work independently, discuss using subject specific language all of which are important and transferable skills supporting other subjects they will continue to study. The topics studied develop their skills further and include more sophisticated use of music software, more complex performance tasks and extended use of musical vocabulary. All 3 elements of musical learning are covered equally ensuring that by the time students have completed their KS3 journey they are in a very good position to continue to KS4 with confidence, whether that be to continue with music or onto other subject areas.

Their musical learning is separated into 3 key areas:

**Listening** – students will continue to read and perform from more complex notation (pitch and rhythm, this naturally becomes more complex during Year 9 where they will be challenged by reading more complex notation, playing left and right hands independently and performing using more complex rhythmic notation ). They will develop their listening and analytical skills further, using more specific and complex musical terms to describe confidently what they hear. They will complete more challenging written tasks – using knowledge of musical elements to describe music in a clear and concise way. These elements include: Texture, Pitch, Structure, Dynamics, Duration, Timbre and Tempo.

**Performance** – students will develop a range of instrumental skills and be encouraged to play and sing in groups; demonstrating empathy and responding to other performers. They will be encouraged to try more challenging pieces, reflecting on their own progress and identifying areas for improvement. They will have access to Ableton, ukuleles, guitar and piano, continuing to develop their solo and ensemble skills in preparation for continued assessment within GCSE and BTEC.

**Composition** – students will develop their compositional skills by exploring the use of more complex melody writing techniques (question and answer phrasing, use of melodic riffs and patterns) and chord progressions (major, minor and diminished chords to enable them to explore a wider variety of moods within their music) They will work towards creating more coherent musical compositions drawing on their responding listening and their developing understanding of musical theory. They will continue to develop their use of our music software (Ableton) by exploring the use of effects, automation, quantising and volume control. They will explore this by completing a number of composition tasks which will include song - writing and arrangement, challenging them to develop their composition skills.

The specific topics we cover in year 9 are:

### Term 1:

#### Solo Performance

With options in mind, we ensure that all students feel confident to be able to choose Music should they wish. We develop this confidence by encouraging the students to select their main instrument

from those they have developed over Years 7 and 8. They will choose from voice, guitar, ukulele or keyboard and through this unit they will stretch themselves to learn a performance piece as a solo on that instrument / voice.

### **Electronic Dance Music**

During the 1<sup>st</sup> term in Year 9, we ensure that all students feel confident when using the music software so that if students choose either GCSE or BTEC they are able to approach their first composition tasks with a good level of prior knowledge. These skills will also give students the opportunity to explore future hobbies (DJing or Sampling) and enjoy music in a number of different ways. We develop this confidence by encouraging the students to explore their own creative compositional skills in the style of Electronic Dance Music. This aims to draw from melody writing, bassline writing, chord pattern composition, drum pattern composition and development of contrasting musical ideas, which they have previously learnt in Year 8. This time we will delve deeper into their understanding of the use of dynamic automation, quantising and musical arrangement skills. This is very popular and directly links to coursework requirements in both GCSE and BTEC.

### **Term 2**

#### **Sequencing**

This topic gives us a fantastic opportunity to focus more on musical technology specific courses, where we imitate a unit of work which is approached not only in Level 2 and 3 BTEC Music Tech but also in A-Level Music Tech: giving our students who are more interested in this element of music the opportunity to explore the use of Ableton in a more enhanced technical way. For example they will create and manipulate effects, explore panning, develop musical textures and creating their own samples or sounds. The outcome will be assessed as a composition / arrangement task in which they will re-create their own version of a pre-existing piece. There will be a number of short tasks where students will be given all the musical parts within the music in a basic form (melodic pattern, bassline notes, chords and any other relevant musical parts) they will then create their own version of the piece we are studying.

#### **Musicals**

With a reputation of putting on two musicals a year at Blatch, we give all students the opportunity to study and develop their knowledge of an essential collection of songs from the repertoire. From rousing showstoppers to sensitive solos and duets, students will be able to combine their acting and singing skills to take on different roles, accents, singing in unison, part singing and harmonies while developing their vocabulary linked to the genre.

### **Term 3**

#### **Film Music**

Within both GCSE and BTEC Music, Film music is explored in detail, therefore the inclusion of this in the latter part of Year 9 music benefits students who are planning on continuing their musical education into KS4. For students choosing not to pursue music further, this unit is engaging, fun and draws on a style of music of which all students have some prior knowledge. We explore the concept of the Leit Motif and relate this to music from famous film scores, leading to students exploring this

as a composition task. We listen and discuss a range of film music examples, analysing mood, musical terms and choices of instrumentation. Students develop their ability to critically analyse music, use more sophisticated musical language and respond to music through extended written tasks. Throughout the topic we explore composition techniques and use Ableton to create music which represents a theme, character or specific mood. This can also become directly useful for those students who go on to Media Studies GCSE in Key Stage 4.

### **Rock Anthems**

In preparation for GCSE Music, we carry out a 'whistlestop' tour of the Rock Anthems from the 70s and 80s and rock out on the way! This unit is great fun for all students, whether following Music into Key Stage 4 or not. 'Sweet Child of Mine', 'Livin on a Prayer', 'The Final Countdown' and 'We Will Rock You' are studied and performed. Key facts and information are learned and the main riffs and characteristics are committed to memory and tested in a listening activity at the end of the unit. Students will perform as singers, synth players, guitarists or drummers. Rock on!