

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

We have recently changed exam boards to one that we believe supports students in showing their ability to apply analysis skills, rather than to recall facts.

In key stage 4 music we have three strands goals:

1. Teaching students a range of techniques to compose structured and controlled pieces that show understanding of harmony, melody, rhythm and texture.
2. Prepare students for performances to be recorded in year 11. One must be an ensemble piece, the other is likely to be a solo piece. Together the minimum performance time should be 4 minutes. We look to have students playing at grade 4 standard by the recording. We do realise that a lot of the preparation for performances happens outside of the timetabled music lessons, but students get support and direction with this element.
3. A large majority of lesson time is given over to preparation for the exam. Students will learn to understand technical language, and how to use that language to describe unfamiliar pieces we listen to. There are 2 set works to learn facts about, but the rest of the time is spent practicing applying these terms in ever more precise and controlled ways.

Key Stage 4 (10)	
Course title: GCSE Music	
Exam board: Eduqas 2016 onwards	
Set works: Africa by TOTO, Bach Badinerie	
Why now?	Year 9 summer half term (new KS4 (10)) - <i>Playing to each other and learning how to use Sibelius</i>
<p>Year 9 teaching is aimed at building ensemble skills and independent learning for all students, including many who have no wider instrumental skills than those gained in KS2 and KS3 classrooms.</p> <p>The majority of students who are able to take GCSE music will have a wider knowledge gained through extracurricular activities on instruments and voices. This is likely to be something they do for pleasure, and perhaps have invested time in having formal lessons outside of the classroom.</p>	<p>Drummers and singers have very different previous experience with notation to piano players or flute players.</p> <p>The practical focus of this half term is to integrate the musicians through performances – solo and one large ensemble – so that trust and sense of standards are established.</p> <p>Of course there will be a wide range of abilities, but this will be the first time that everyone plays the instrument they are most familiar with.</p> <p>They are only asked to prepare 30 seconds to begin with, which allows students to get some feedback and to break the ice with performance.</p> <p>Teaching focuses on transferring a piece of written music into the software package Sibelius.</p> <p>Many of the lessons will be on developing understanding of this software and building speed of notation recognition and input methods.</p> <p>There is a free cut-down version of Sibelius software students can download for use at home: Sibelius First. Other packages can be bought.</p>

<p>Why now? Upcoming ensemble work will require a full pop group—all students will learn the basics of all roles. Often students will excel at one branch of music making and many of our students are keen to move on from keyboard tasks, despite the very great benefits of those skills. Many students enjoy being strong performers once the burden of pitch and fine motor controls are removed.</p>	<p>Key stage 4 (10) Autumn half term 1 and 2 – Learning about learning, and lots of composition tips</p> <p>Composition starter activities continue with many short exercises. One of the issues students face is how to construct a melody. This is a widely misunderstood task: composition requires very little inspiration, but lots of technique. Techniques from repetition, to many ways to develop motifs are practiced.</p> <p>The next issue is knowing when the melody fails to work with the chosen chords. The use of non-chord notes is a really important addition to melodic construction, but learning when and when not to use non-chord notes is a main thrust this term.</p> <p>Then students need to develop escape strategies when they do choose to use non-chord notes.</p> <p>Theory preparation for the exam is begun by introducing all the terms that relate to Harmony, Melody, Rhythm, Texture. Students learn that they have to be able to compartmentalise these separate areas of the elements of music – otherwise they will always risk answering a different question than the ones posed in the exam.</p> <p>Sonority and structure are for another time.</p> <p>There will be two in-class analysis assessments – the first is a dry run analysis of a flute and piano piece by Schubert. This will raise the bar and begin to apply analysis terminology. The second will be the real assessment, and should show improvement on the selection and application of correct and relevant terminology. It is on the Bizet Minuet.</p> <p>We need to begin a more serious focus on solo and ensemble performances with discussions on current ability levels, and setting challenging but achievable goals to reach grade 4/5 standards for the best results.</p> <p>Students will select pieces and play to the teacher small extracts to show progress.</p>
<p>Why now? Compositions develop, and a second one will be started. This gives students opportunities for fresh starts if their first composition is not progressing in a way they enjoy – although</p>	<p>Spring half term 1 – introduction to 4 areas of study:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Musical forms and devices 2. Music for ensemble 3. Film music, 4. Popular music <p>Students are introduced to studying pieces from a wide range of styles specified by the board.</p>

<p>the learning achieved will allow faster progress next time. The next composition will have a different starting place – either writing a Ground Bass line, writing an ensemble piece with more complex textures. In addition to compositions we explore styles.</p>	<p>The actual areas of study are not important to keep separate, and learning about harmony, use of instruments etc. will be seamless across all areas of study.</p> <p>We will tie in Music for ensemble with a selection of different ensembles, tying these into some of the main Western Art music periods (string quartets for example).</p> <p>We will use extracts to practise analysis and to build familiarity with score reading.</p> <p>This matches well with the booklet (having completed the harmony, texture, rhythm and melody booklets, now students have a more challenging booklet on style periods and all of the elements of music defined in one place). These fundamental ‘classical’ style periods will contain many of the required ensembles to be covered and will be taught methodically. Up until this point much of the teaching will be adaptive – working around the students’ starting places and taking care to inform, question, explore misunderstandings and embed understanding with teaching that bounces off their knowledge. This remains a fundamental approach, but now styles will be delivered in a more didactic method.</p> <p>This half term’s work links to the new composition which will be for several instruments with independent parts (rather than solo instrument and accompaniment).</p> <p>Students will therefore be focusing more on texture, sonority, melody (part writing) and rhythm by combining several lines. To tie all aspects together we begin to study the first of the two set works for Eduqas <i>Bach’s Badinerie</i> which contains strong examples of ensemble writing.</p> <p>This will also lead us to reinforce knowledge of instruments of the orchestra across the main periods.</p>
<p>Why now?</p> <p>We should reinforce the learning with the second set work. These will be revisited at various times in the course, with much focus on retention of facts in year 11.</p>	<p>Spring half term 2</p> <p>Building on the introduction to Areas of Study, we look at pop music, including Rock, Reggae and Soul.</p> <p>Although we will look at many songs within those genres we tie it together with closer study of the second set work, Africa by Toto.</p> <p>We will look at harmony and tonality – which will need to be embedded knowledge for the final exam – but also first have open discussions on the other elements of music which are easier to identify (structure, use of instruments, melody, rhythm).</p> <p>We will look at riffs within pop music and this could be a 3rd option for composition.</p> <p>Have a look at these 20 rock riffs for starters: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_wejlmLoVw</p>

	<p>At this stage we also review personal playing progress, reintroducing an informal performance opportunity for all students.</p> <p>We will have had discussions on solo pieces and how they are progressing – the concert will be a motivation to polish these early performances though the actual recordings will take place in November and February of year 11.</p>
<p>Why now?</p> <p>By now the elements of music should be established. We should be able to apply terms to music that we explore through scores, and through listening without scores.</p>	<p>Summer half term 1</p> <p>We carry on looking at a range of genres, sit a first more formal mock to include dictation and unfamiliar listening questions that are in the same style as the real exam, also containing questions on the two set works.</p> <p>Students will begin to prioritise one composition for a rough draft completion by the end of the summer, and with at least 2 other partial compositions in readiness for the Set Composition brief in September of year 11.</p> <p>We will also explore film music this half term, looking at the differences between heroic themes and music written for comedy or romance. We will explore the importance of sonority especially in this, but also look at how rhythm, melody, texture, harmony and melody set the time, place and mood of film.</p>
<p>Why now?</p> <p>Check through learning so far – in time for an extra push before the summer. Students will be clear on their readiness in the coursework both in composition and in performance.</p>	<p>Summer half term 2 – recapping the year’s learning, digging deeper.</p> <p>The schedule of events next year (key stage 4 (11)) will be the driving force to ensure that students understand how to get ready.</p> <p>Solo performances are in November – pieces of 2 minutes and grade 4 or 5 standard.</p> <p>Ensemble performances will be in February, again at least 2 minutes and of a similar standard.</p> <p>Composition 1 will need to be absolutely complete by December, and Composition 2 will be the main focus from September.</p> <p>The exam content will now be clear to students and we will start to prepare retention on information on the set works, Badinerie and Africa this term.</p> <p>Unfamiliar listening will form the basis of most theory lessons, with constant reinforcement of the elements of music terminology and practice in how to apply that information to unfamiliar listening.</p> <p>Regular practice on dictations, key signatures, Treble, Alto and Bass clefs will reveal issues that need to be resolved differently for each student.</p> <p>Fluency in identification of chords from notation is crucial and will be revisited frequently.</p> <p>We will also continue to build on styles and genres across the 4 areas of study with an emphasis on learning to describe in full</p>

	<p>sentences, especially building ability in justifying composition choices in pieces we study, and in copying devices into student compositions.</p> <p>Students will have a final upload of their main composition before the end of term to receive precise and targeted feedback for development.</p> <p>A full-scale mock will have taken place by the end of term.</p>
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