

Spalding Grammar School Sixth Form

Subject Information

Music

Entry Requirement:

Grade 6 in GCSE Music if studied, plus a minimum ability of being able to perform Grade 4 standard repertoire on your specific instrument. Students that have not studied GCSE Music must be able to perform to the same Grade 4 standard and should speak to the Director of Music before applying.

Awarding body: Eduqas

About the subject: Music is an ideal A Level to take if you want to explore creativity, challenge yourself to achieve the highest standard of performing on your instrument and compose in a style of music that you prefer. Through listening and appraising you will have the opportunity to develop an understanding and appreciation of different styles and genres of music, taking an in depth look into musical analysis, finding out how and why composers wrote their music and the effect that they intended to create.

The A Level is split into three components with a choice of taking either option A or B in the Performance and Composition elements:

Component 1: Performing (Option A: 35% or Option B: 25%)

The performing component consists of creating a recital that is performed at school in front of a visiting examiner from Eduqas. Option A requires a total performance time of ten to twelve minutes with a minimum of three pieces, two of which being linked to an Area of Study (see below). Option B requires a performance total of six to eight minutes with a minimum of two performance pieces. They can also be a mixture of ensemble and solo pieces. A minimum standard of Grade 6 performance must be reached by the Spring of Year 13 in preparation for the performance recital.

Component 2: Composing (Option A: 25% or Option B: 35%)

Option A requires two compositions lasting four to six minutes. One of the compositions must reflect the musical techniques and conventions associated with the Western Classical Tradition in response to a brief set by Eduqas at the start of Year 13. The second composition will be completed in Year 12 and is a free composition that can be composed in any style for any instrument(s). Option B requires a total duration of compositions for eight to ten minutes and requires three compositions, the first two as for option A and the 3rd composition reflecting the style of another different Area of Study (see below)

Component 3: Appraising (40% 2hour and 15 minutes written exam taken at the end of Year 13).

The listening exam will focus on three Areas of Study which can be selected from the list below:

Area of Study A: The Western Classical Tradition (The Development of the Symphony 1750 – 1900)

This Area of Study includes two set works:

Symphony No. 104 in D major, 'London': Haydn

Symphony No. 4 in A major, 'Italian' Mendelssohn

Students will study the development of the symphony from its emergence in the early classical period to the close of the romantic period, 1750 to 1900. Students will gain an understanding of how the symphonic genre developed, using a number of examples from different composers and different periods. They will look at how musical elements are used in the symphony and the use of instrumentation and development of the orchestra in the period. Students will also be required to read and write staff notation including treble and bass clef and key signatures too.

As a class there is also a choice of one Area of Study from:

Area of Study B: Rock and Pop

Students will focus on five pop genres between 1960 to 2000 including pop, rock (including progressive rock, heavy metal, folk-rock and punk rock), soul, funk (and disco), folk (and country). They will gain and understanding of how musical elements are used in rock and pop, the relationship between lyrics and music, the use of music technology, important bands within the genre and how rock and pop has changed over time.

or

Area of Study C: Musical Theatre

Students will study six musical theatre composers of the 20th and 21st century: Richard Rogers, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, Claude-Michel Schonberg, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Stephen Schwartz. They will gain knowledge of how musical elements are used in musical theatre, the role of the accompanying orchestra in musical theatre, types of song and different types of character within musical theatre too.

And finally students will also study:

Area of Study E: Into the Twentieth Century

From which the two set works are:

***Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano Movement 2 by Poulenc and
3 Nocturnes, Number 1, Nuages by Debussy.***

In this area of study students will study the works of representative European composers from the period as a basis for understanding how music is created, developed and performed for different audiences in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The development of music in this period is categorised into successive but overlapping 'schools' of composition. Students will study three of them:

Impressionism,

Expressionism (including Serialism),

Neo-classicism.

They will also look at how musical elements are used in this period of composition including structure, tonality, texture, sonority, melody, harmonic language, tempo, metre, rhythm and dynamics.

All students who study Music at this level would benefit from having instrumental/vocal lessons so they have access to specialist instrumental or vocal support with the performance component of the course. They are also expected to take on a lead role within then enrichment activities offered by the Music Department which include various bands and vocal groups.

The study of music can lead to many varied careers beside that of performer or composer such as Music Therapy, conducting, sound operating, studio work, production, merchandising, radio and television and music journalism to name but a few. More importantly, it also offers the chance to develop and nurture creativity and skill that can open the door to so many different opportunities post-16 and beyond.