

Music

EDEXCEL Specification



General information:

Music A-Level is a multi-skilled, rigorous and academic course which sits well with other subjects as a route into university. Universities recognise both its creative and academic qualities, and there is no problem with it being regarded as a soft touch – those days are long behind us. Pupils will develop their skills and build their confidence in a number of areas: performing; composing; listening; essay writing; contextual understanding and using harmony effectively.

Course content:

There are three units:

1. Performing - an 8 minute recital. (30%)
2. Composing – a 4 minute piece to a brief and some stylistic exercises. (30%)
3. Appraising – set works and listening skills; Musical understanding and essay writing. (40%)

How is the course taught and assessed?

The course is taught jointly at BWS and at South Wilts Grammar School. Unit 2 is taught here using the Sibelius software programme. Unit 3 is taught at South Wilts. There are four periods taught at each school per week.

In Year 12, we cover preparatory work topics, including basic harmony techniques building slowly to Year 13. Any composition started in Year 12 may be continued in Year 13, or you may start a new piece. In Year 13, we build towards exam – style questions as we move towards the middle of the spring term.

Performing is assessed by a recital at the end of the spring term of Year 13. It is externally assessed. The composition to a brief is sent off for assessment, together with the stylistic exercises, in May of Year 13. The Unit 3 examination takes place in the summer series of A Levels at the end of the course.

Entry requirements:	Results information:	Top destinations for students:
As well as the general entry requirements for BWS, GCSE grade 7 or above. Grade 6 on your instrument or voice.	In 2019 100% of pupils scored A* - C and 78% scored A* - B.	Students study at a range of universities, including Oxford, Cambridge, Bristol and Cardiff. We have had recent scholarships to top universities.

Beyond the curriculum:

There are opportunities to enjoy music beyond the curriculum. The school has a very good boys' choir, and a separate Sixth Form chamber choir. There is an orchestra, a jazz band, and a string ensemble. Pupils often form their own groups, for example we currently have a rock band and a string quartet in Sixth Form.

There are regular concerts at venues such as City Hall, St Martin's Church and Salisbury Cathedral. The Choir has toured to Belgium and Holland in the last few years.