

A level Music What will students be examined on, and how we can support our students

The exam boards have now released all of the changes for this years exam, this page will outline those changes, giving ideas of what we can all do to support our students.

Unit one – Performance

Students must perform one or more pieces, these pieces must be at least three minutes in total.

How can we support our students?

Encouraging students to practice regularly, small and often is the best way. Offer to listen to the students, suggest students record themselves and listen to their playing.

Unit two – Composition

Students must compose one piece, with a combined duration of three minutes.

How can we support our students?

Students compose in school, using the software in school, so all is covered in school.

Unit three – Listening and appraising

The first section of the paper will have three listening questions, based on the following set works:

- Clara Wieck-Schumann, Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17: Movement 1
- Courtney Pine, Back in the Day: Inner State (of Mind), Lady Day and (John Coltrane) and Love and Affection
- Bernard Herrmann, Psycho: Prelude, The City, Marion, The Murder (Shower Scene), The Toys, The Cellar, Discovery, Finale

There will then be one aural dictation question, with students asked to write down the pitch and rhythm of what they hear, it will be an instrumental piece.

Section B of the exam will ask students to write two essays.

The first essay will ask students to write about an unfamiliar piece of Film music, outlining how the composers uses the musical elements to bring the piece to life.

The final essay will ask the students to choose one of four essays, and to write about three elements of music, as set by the exam board on the day. The essay will be based on the following set works:

- J. S. Bach, Cantata, Ein feste Burg, BWV 80: Movements 1, 2, 8
- Kate Bush, Hounds of Love: Cloudbusting, And Dream of Sheep, and Under Ice
- Anoushka Shankar, Breathing Under Water: Burn, Breathing Under Water and Easy
- Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring: Introduction, The Augurs of Spring, and Ritual of Abduction

How can we support our students?

For questions 1-3 and the final essay, ensuring students regularly listen to the set works is the most important thing to do. If you can ask students to talk about the set works, that would be great.

Encouraging students to listen to a wide range of film music, as well as music from the same period as the set works for the final essay question is also really important.