

A LEVEL MUSIC: The Baroque Concerto



West Kirby
Grammar School

Learning about this topic is important because: This unit develops your understanding of the Baroque solo concerto through three contrasting set works by Purcell, Vivaldi and Bach. You will explore how composers used melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, tonality, form and instrumentation to create distinctive musical styles during the Baroque period. Alongside detailed score study, you will develop the ability to analyse unfamiliar Baroque concertos, place music within its historical and social context, and communicate perceptive musical judgements using accurate specialist vocabulary. These skills are essential for success in the AQA A Level Listening and Appraising examination.

This builds on: GCSE study of the Brandenburg Concerto, the musical elements, score reading, listening and appraising, Baroque musical features and essay writing. Students build on their analytical skills and contextual understanding whilst extending their ability to identify sophisticated compositional techniques and stylistic conventions.

This leads to: The study of Romantic Piano Music (Chopin, Brahms and Grieg), further unseen listening, extended analytical essays and synoptic preparation for the A Level examination. It also provides the historical and stylistic foundation for understanding the development of the concerto throughout the Classical and Romantic periods.

We will learn:

- How the Baroque solo concerto developed as a musical genre.
- How Purcell, Vivaldi and Bach each use the musical elements to create distinctive musical styles.
- How ritornello form, episodes and solo passages structure Baroque concertos.
- How melody, harmony, tonality, texture and rhythm interact to create musical interest.
- How contrapuntal writing, imitation and sequence are used throughout the set works.
- How the relationship between the soloist and accompanying ensemble develops across the three concertos.
- How historical, cultural and performance contexts influence the music.
- How to analyse unfamiliar Baroque concertos using stylistic knowledge.
- How to write perceptive extended responses using accurate musical vocabulary.
- How to make connections between the set works and the wider Baroque repertoire.

We will develop/practise skills including:

- Listening critically to identify stylistic features of Baroque concertos.
- Annotating full scores using sophisticated analytical vocabulary.
- Identifying compositional devices
- Analysing the musical elements in depth.
- Applying historical and cultural context to support analytical observations.
- Answering AQA 10-mark analysis questions using evidence from the score.
- Developing aural skills through regular unseen Baroque listening.
- Writing extended analytical essays using precise musical terminology.
- Applying knowledge confidently to unfamiliar extracts from the Baroque period

Your Teacher will assess your knowledge by:

- Regular retrieval practice and knowledge checks.
- Annotated score analysis.
- Listening and Appraising activities.
- AQA-style 10-mark analytical responses.
- Unseen Baroque listening exercises.
- Mock examination questions based on unfamiliar extracts.
- End-of-unit assessments covering both the set works and unseen Baroque concertos.

You could learn more about this topic by:

- Listening to additional concertos by Purcell, Vivaldi and J.S Bach
- Comparing different performances using both period and modern instruments.
- Using the **AQA A Level Music Study Guide** and annotated scores.
- Studying the original scores whilst listening to professional recordings.
- Researching historically informed performance practice and Baroque ornamentation.
- Exploring the development of the concerto from the Baroque into the Classical period.
- Completing additional unseen listening and analysis of Baroque concertos.



AQA Study
Guide



Audio-
Purcell



Audio –
Vivaldi Mvmt
1



Audio –
Vivaldi Mvmt
2



Audio –
Vivaldi Mvmt
3



Audio Bach

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes: Solo Concerto, Ritornello, Episode, Concertino, Ripieno, Tutti, Basso Continuo, Figured Bass, Sequence, Imitation, Counterpoint, Polyphony, Homophony, Functional Harmony, Circle of Fifths, Modulation, Cadence, Perfect Cadence, Imperfect Cadence, Suspension, Pedal, Ostinato, Ground Bass, Inversion, Canon, Fugue, Fugal Entry, Subject, Countersubject, Stretto, Binary Form, Ternary Form, Da Capo, Fortspinnung, Siciliana, Ornamentation, Trill, Mordent, Appoggiatura, Acciacatura, Bariolage, Terraced Dynamics, Concerto Grosso, Tonality, Texture, Diatonic, Chromaticism, Harmonic Rhythm, Motor Rhythm, Sequential Modulation.

A LEVEL MUSIC: The Operas of Mozart



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Learning about this topic is important because: This unit develops your understanding of Mozart's operatic style through the study of *The Marriage of Figaro*. You will explore how Mozart combines music, drama and characterisation to create one of the greatest comic operas ever written. Through detailed score study, listening and contextual analysis, you will investigate how melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm, texture, orchestration and vocal writing work together to communicate emotion, relationships and dramatic action. You will also learn to identify the stylistic features of Classical opera in unfamiliar extracts and communicate sophisticated musical judgements using accurate musical vocabulary. These skills are essential for success in the AQA A Level Listening and Appraising examination.

This builds on: GCSE study of vocal music and opera, the Musical Elements, listening and appraising skills, Classical style, Beethoven's *Pathétique Sonata*, Baroque Solo Concerto and Romantic Piano Music. Students continue to develop analytical, contextual and essay-writing skills whilst applying their knowledge of Classical musical language to opera.

This leads to: Musical Theatre, further unseen listening, extended analytical essays and synoptic preparation for the A Level examination. The study of Mozart's operas also develops a deeper understanding of Classical style and dramatic composition that supports wider listening across the course.

We will learn:

- How Mozart combines music and drama to portray character, relationships and emotion.
- How operatic forms including aria, recitative, ensemble and finale function within the drama.
- How melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, tonality and orchestration contribute to characterisation.
- How Mozart uses vocal writing to reflect personality, status and dramatic situation.
- How the orchestra supports and comments upon the action on stage.
- How Classical style is reflected in Mozart's melodic, harmonic and structural writing.
- How historical, social and political influences shaped *The Marriage of Figaro*.
- How to analyse unfamiliar Mozart operatic extracts using stylistic knowledge.
- How to write perceptive extended responses using specialist musical vocabulary.
- How to compare *The Marriage of Figaro* with other Mozart operas and vocal works.

We will develop/practise skills including:

- Listening critically to identify the stylistic features of Mozart's operas.
- Annotating full vocal scores using accurate analytical terminology.
- Identifying operatic forms including recitative, aria, duet, trio, quartet and ensemble.
- Analysing the music using the musical elements, orchestration and dramatic structure.
- Recognising cadences, modulation, phrase structure and Classical harmonic language.
- Applying historical and dramatic context to support analytical observations.
- Interpreting the relationship between text, music and character.
- Developing aural skills through regular unseen Classical opera listening.
- Answering AQA-style 10-mark analytical questions using score evidence.
- Writing extended analytical essays comparing familiar and unfamiliar operatic extracts.

Your Teacher will assess your knowledge by:

- Regular retrieval practice and knowledge quizzes.
- Annotated score analysis.
- Listening and Appraising activities.
- AQA-style 10-mark analytical responses.
- Extended essays analysing character, drama and musical language.
- Unseen Mozart opera listening exercises.
- Mock examination questions based on unfamiliar Classical vocal extracts.
- End-of-unit assessments covering both the set work and unfamiliar Mozart opera.

You could learn more about this topic by:

- Listening to complete performances of *The Marriage of Figaro* with the score.
- Exploring Mozart's other operas including *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* and *The Magic Flute*.
- Comparing productions from different opera companies.
- Researching the history of eighteenth-century opera and the reforms
- Studying the original Beaumarchais play and its influence on Mozart and Da Ponte.
- Using the AQA A Level Teacher Guide, anthology scores and wider listening resources.
- Exploring historically informed performance practice and Classical orchestral performance.

A LEVEL MUSIC: The Operas of Mozart



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Past Papers



Wider Listening
–
Don Giovanni



AQA Study
Guide



The Marriage of
Figaro

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes: Opera Buffa, Libretto, Recitative Secco, Recitative Accompagnato, Aria, Cavatina, Ensemble, Finale, Overture, Da Ponte, Coloratura, Syllabic, Melismatic, Tessitura, Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone, Bass, Characterisation, Word Painting, Leitmotif (comparison), Sonata Form, Binary Form, Rounded Binary, Sequence, Conjunct, Disjunct, Cadence, Perfect Cadence, Imperfect Cadence, Interrupted Cadence, Phrygian Cadence, Dominant Seventh, Secondary Dominant, Modulation, Chromaticism, Pedal Note, Suspension, Appoggiatura, Acciaccatura, Ornamentation, Countermelody, Alberti Bass, Homophony, Polyphony, Imitation, Counterpoint, Tonality, Texture, Phrase, Period, Antecedent, Consequent, Buffo, Basso Buffo, Comic Timing, Dramatic Irony.

A LEVEL MUSIC: Performance



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Learning about this topic is important because: Performance is at the heart of musical communication. This unit develops the technical, interpretative and expressive skills required to become an accomplished musician. Students learn how to prepare performances that demonstrate fluency, confidence, stylistic understanding and musical sensitivity whilst communicating effectively with an audience. Students will develop independent practice strategies, refine their technique and interpret repertoire from a range of musical styles. They will learn how composers' intentions, historical context and performance practice influence interpretation and will perform music that demonstrates increasing levels of technical and expressive control.

This builds on: This unit builds on the performance skills developed at GCSE and through graded instrumental or vocal examinations. Students will further develop the skills they have gained through performing in a variety of groups and as soloists throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. It also builds upon students' growing understanding of musical interpretation developed through their study of the A Level set works, enabling them to perform with greater stylistic awareness. In addition, students will draw upon their knowledge of music theory and analysis to inform their performances, while also applying their practical performing experience to support more effective and idiomatic composition for instruments and voices.

This leads to: This unit leads to the Year 13 Final Recital and the A Level Performance examination, where students demonstrate the technical and expressive skills they have developed throughout the course. It also prepares students for university, conservatoire and music college auditions, as well as future professional performance opportunities. The knowledge and experience gained will support students in solo, ensemble, orchestral, choral and chamber music performance, and provide a strong foundation for those wishing to pursue careers in music teaching or conducting. Above all, it encourages a lifelong appreciation of high-quality, informed musical performance and continued personal musical development.

We will learn:

- How to perform with increasing technical security, fluency and confidence.
- How to communicate musical ideas through expressive interpretation.
- How composers use articulation, dynamics, tempo, phrasing and timbre to shape performances.
- How historical context and performance practice influence interpretation.
- How to prepare stylistically appropriate performances from different musical periods.
- How to evaluate recordings and refine personal interpretations.
- How to perform accurately both as a soloist and, where appropriate, as part of an ensemble.
- How to rehearse effectively with accompanists and other performers.
- How to develop stage presence, confidence and communication with an audience.
- How to prepare performances suitable for A Level assessment.

We will develop/practise skills including:

- Advanced instrumental or vocal technique.
- Secure intonation and rhythmic accuracy.
- Technical exercises to improve agility, tone and control.
- Musical phrasing and expressive shaping.
- Stylistic interpretation appropriate to different genres and historical periods.
- Effective independent practice routines.
- Critical listening and self-evaluation.
- Ensemble awareness and communication.
- Rehearsal techniques with accompanists and chamber groups.
- Performing from memory where appropriate.
- Managing performance anxiety and developing confidence under assessment conditions.
- Reflecting on feedback to improve subsequent performances.

Your Teacher will assess your knowledge by:

- Scheduled lesson performances and practical demonstrations.
- Individual performance tutorials.
- Ongoing verbal and written feedback.
- Recorded performances throughout the year.
- Technical exercises and performance workshops.
- Self and peer evaluation.
- Mock recital performances under examination conditions.
- Assessment using the AQA Performance marking criteria, including: Technical control; Accuracy; Interpretation; Expressive communication; Stylistic awareness; Overall musical performance

You could learn more about this topic by:

- Listening to professional recordings of your recital repertoire.
- Comparing interpretations by internationally recognised performers.
- Attending live concerts, masterclasses and recitals.
- Watching performances from the BBC Proms, Royal Opera House, Wigmore Hall, Berlin Philharmonic Digital Concert Hall or National Theatre Live (for vocal performance).
- Studying historical performance practice through books, articles and documentaries.
- Recording your own performances regularly and evaluating them against the AQA assessment criteria.
- Performing regularly in school concerts, competitions, festivals and external ensembles.
- Working towards graded performance examinations alongside A Level study.

A LEVEL MUSIC: Performance



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- Final recorded recital submitted as part of the A Level assessment.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes: Interpretation, Performance Practice, Articulation, Dynamics, Phrasing, Rubato, Tempo, Pulse, Intonation, Tone Quality, Timbre, Balance, Blend, Projection, Vibrato, Diction, Breath Control, Resonance, Legato, Staccato, Marcato, Accent, Ornamentation, Cadence, Tempo Rubato, Agogic Accent, Texture, Ensemble, Coordination, Communication, Precision, Fluency, Technical Facility, Fingering, Bowing, Pedalling, Embouchure, Voicing, Accompaniment, Stylistic Awareness, Historical Context, Stage Presence, Musical Character, Expressive Intent, Interpretation, Rehearsal Strategy, Evaluation, Reflection.



AQA Specification: Performance Grids



Guidance for Performance



e-music maestro – preparing for you're A Level performance

A LEVEL MUSIC: Composition



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Learning about this topic is important because: Composition allows you to become an independent musician by creating original music that demonstrates creativity, technical understanding and expressive intent. Throughout this unit you will learn how to develop musical ideas into coherent compositions, applying your knowledge of harmony, melody, rhythm, texture, structure, tonality and instrumentation. You will compose both freely and in response to a brief, refining your work through drafting, evaluation and revision. This unit encourages experimentation whilst developing the technical and creative skills expected of an A Level composer.

This builds on: GCSE Composition, Music Theory, Performance, Harmony, the Musical Elements and the analytical skills developed through studying the set works. Students apply techniques encountered in Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Twentieth-Century repertoire to their own original compositions.

This leads to: The A Level Composition Portfolio, university and conservatoire composition courses, Music Technology, Film and Media composition, songwriting, arranging and further creative musical study. It also strengthens analytical understanding across all Areas of Study by encouraging students to compose in a wide variety of musical styles.

We will learn:

- How to generate, develop and refine original musical ideas.
- How to compose effectively in response to both a free brief and a set brief.
- How the Musical Elements combine to create coherent compositions.
- How to manipulate motifs through sequence, inversion, augmentation, diminution and transformation.
- How to write idiomatically for voices and instruments.
- How to use advanced harmonic language, modulation and chromaticism effectively.
- How to write in 4 part harmony with a particular focus on the Bach Chorale.
- How to create stylistically convincing compositions across a variety of genres.
- How to use music technology to compose, edit, sequence and present music professionally.
- How to evaluate and refine compositions using ongoing critical reflection.
- How to produce high-quality scores and recordings suitable for A Level submission.

We will develop/practise skills including:

- Creating and developing original musical ideas.
- Writing effective melodies, accompaniments and bass lines.
- Using harmony, modulation and cadences to shape musical structure.
- Developing motifs and themes through a range of compositional techniques.
- Planning and structuring extended compositions.
- Writing idiomatically for solo instruments, ensembles and voices.
- Experimenting with texture, orchestration and timbre.
- Using notation software and Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) to realise musical ideas.
- Critically evaluating and refining compositions through regular drafting.
- Presenting professional-quality scores and recordings for assessment.

Your Teacher will assess your knowledge by:

- Regular composition workshops and individual tutorials.
- Draft compositions with written and verbal feedback.
- Peer and self-evaluation against the AQA assessment criteria.
- Short compositional exercises focusing on specific techniques.
- Assessment of harmonic, melodic and structural development.
- Evaluation of creativity, originality and technical control.
- Review of scores, recordings and written annotations.
- Final assessment of both the Free Composition and the Composition to a Brief submitted for A Level moderation.

You could learn more about this topic by:

- Listening widely across different musical styles and historical periods.
- Studying the compositional techniques of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Shostakovich, Messiaen, Reich and contemporary composers.
- Exploring orchestration, arranging and film composition.
- Using MuseScore, Logic Pro or other notation and sequencing software.
- Watching composer masterclasses (Music Matters) and analysing professional composers' sketches.
- Reading books and articles on compositional techniques and orchestration.
- Looking at Riemenschneider for Bach Chorale's
- Entering national composition competitions and writing music for school ensembles and performances.

A LEVEL MUSIC: Composition



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Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes: Motif, Theme, Development, Sequence, Inversion, Retrograde, Augmentation, Diminution, Transformation, Melody, Countermelody, Harmony, Chord Progression, Functional Harmony, Non-functional Harmony, Cadence, Modulation, Tonality, Chromaticism, Texture, Timbre, Orchestration, Instrumentation, Voicing, Ostinato, Pedal, Drone, Canon, Fugue, Counterpoint, Polyphony, Homophony, Rhythm, Syncopation, Polyrhythm, Additive Rhythm, Phrase, Period, Binary Form, Ternary Form, Rondo Form, Sonata Form, Theme and Variations, Through-Composed, Minimalism, Aleatoric, Serialism, Graphic Notation, MIDI, Sequencing, DAW, Score, Lead Sheet, Realisation, Refinement, Evaluation, Idiomatic Writing.



AQA Specification: Composition Grids



Music Matters: Support videos for many aspects of composition and 4-part writing



Guide to Chorale Writing



Tom Pankhurst's Guide to A level Composition

A LEVEL MUSIC: The Romantic Piano Music



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Learning about this topic is important because: This unit develops your understanding of Romantic piano music through the contrasting styles of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg. You will explore how nineteenth-century composers used the piano to communicate emotion, imagination and individual expression. Through detailed score study, listening and contextual analysis, you will investigate how melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, tonality, structure and pianistic techniques combine to create expressive music. You will also learn to recognise the stylistic features of Romantic piano repertoire in unfamiliar extracts and communicate sophisticated musical judgements using accurate specialist vocabulary. These skills are essential for success in the AQA A Level Listening and Appraising examination.

This builds on: The study of the Baroque Solo Concerto, GCSE study of Beethoven's *Pathétique Sonata*, the Musical Elements, listening and appraising skills, and score-reading developed throughout GCSE and the first half of Year 12. Students extend their understanding of harmony, texture, tonality and musical context whilst developing more advanced analytical and evaluative skills.

This leads to: Musical Theatre, 20th Century Art Music, further unseen listening, extended analytical essays and synoptic preparation for the A Level examination. The stylistic and historical understanding developed in this unit also provides an important bridge between Romanticism and the musical innovations of the twentieth century.

We will learn:

- How developments in piano construction transformed Romantic composition and performance.
- How Chopin, Brahms and Grieg each created distinctive Romantic musical styles.
- How melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, tonality and structure combine to create expressive music.
- How Romantic composers developed themes through variation, transformation and motivic development.
- How harmony, chromaticism and modulation create colour, tension and emotional depth.
- How pianistic techniques such as rubato, pedalling, arpeggiation and ornamentation contribute to expressive performance.
- How historical, cultural and artistic movements influenced Romantic music.
- How to analyse unfamiliar Romantic piano music using stylistic knowledge.
- How to write perceptive extended responses using sophisticated musical vocabulary.
- How to make connections between the set works and the wider Romantic repertoire.

We will develop/practise skills including:

- Listening critically to identify stylistic features of Romantic piano music.
- Annotating full scores using accurate analytical terminology.
- Comparing the musical language of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg.
- Analysing the musical elements in detail.
- Identifying chromatic harmony, modulation, thematic development and characteristic Romantic devices.
- Applying historical and cultural context to support analytical observations.
- Answering AQA-style 10-mark analysis questions using evidence from the score.
- Developing aural skills through regular unseen Romantic listening.
- Writing extended analytical essays using precise musical terminology.
- Applying knowledge confidently to unfamiliar Romantic piano extracts

Your Teacher will assess your knowledge by:

- Regular retrieval practice and knowledge checks.
- Annotated score analysis.
- Listening and Appraising activities.
- AQA-style 10-mark analytical responses.
- Extended essays comparing the three composers.
- Unseen Romantic listening exercises.
- Mock examination questions based on unfamiliar piano extracts.
- End-of-unit assessments covering both the set works and unseen Romantic repertoire.

You could learn more about this topic by:

- Listening to additional piano works by Grieg, Chopin and Brahms
- Comparing performances by different pianists to explore interpretation, tempo and rubato.
- Using the **AQA A Level Music Study Guide**, anthology scores and wider listening resources.
- Studying original scores whilst listening to professional recordings.
- Researching the development of the nineteenth-century piano and its influence on composition.
- Exploring the relationship between Romantic music, literature, art and nationalism.
- Completing additional unseen listening and analysis of Romantic piano music.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes: Rubato, Character Piece, Nocturne, Ballade, Intermezzo, Lyric Piece, Programme Music, Romanticism, Nationalism, Chromaticism, Modulation, Secondary Dominant, Pivot Chord, Diminished Seventh, Dominant Seventh, Augmented Chord, Harmonic Rhythm, Cadence, Sequence, Suspension, Pedal Point, Arpeggiated Accompaniment, Inner Melody, Countermelody, Polyphony, Homophony, Monophony, Texture, Tonality, Motif, Thematic Transformation, Syncopation, Polyrhythm, Fermata, Coda, Codetta, Alla Breve, Una Corda, Tre Corde, Glissando, Ornamentation,



AQA Study Guide



Audio - Chopin -
Nocturne in E minor
Op.72 No.1



Audio - Chopin
Ballade No.2 in F
major Op.38



Audio - Brahms -
Intermezzo in A
major Op.118 No.2



Audio - Brahms -
Ballade in G minor
Op.118 No.3



Audio - Grieg -
Norwegian March
No.2



Audio - Grieg -
Notturmo No.4

A LEVEL MUSIC: The Romantic Piano Music



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Appoggiatura, Acciaccatura, Trill, Octave Doubling, Virtuosity, Expressive Tempo, Cantabile, Bel Canto, Legato, Stretto.