

A LEVEL MUSIC: The Romantic Piano Music



West Kirby
Grammar School

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 <i>Pathétique Sonata</i>, 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

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

A LEVEL MUSIC: Musical Theatre



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Learning about this topic is important because: This unit develops your understanding of Music for Theatre through the study of five influential composers: Kurt Weill, Richard Rodgers, Stephen Sondheim, Claude-Michel Schönberg and Jason Robert Brown. You will explore how musical theatre has evolved throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and how composers combine melody, harmony, rhythm, orchestration, vocal writing and dramatic structure to communicate character, emotion and narrative. Through listening, score study and contextual analysis, you will develop the skills needed to recognise stylistic features in both set works and unfamiliar extracts, while writing perceptive analytical and evaluative essays using accurate musical vocabulary.

This builds on: Year 12 study of Mozart Opera, GCSE study of Defying Gravity, the Musical Elements, listening and appraising skills, wider listening, score analysis and contextual understanding. Students continue to build upon their knowledge of musical styles, theatrical conventions and compositional techniques across different historical periods

This leads to: Synoptic revision across all Areas of Study, unfamiliar listening, Section C essay writing and preparation for the AQA A Level Music examination. The stylistic understanding developed also provides an excellent foundation for further study of music, musical theatre, performance and composition.

We will learn:

- How the styles of Kurt Weill, Richard Rodgers, Stephen Sondheim, Claude-Michel Schönberg and Jason Robert Brown compare and contrast.
- How composers use music to develop character, drama and storytelling.
- How the musical elements and orchestration contribute to dramatic meaning.
- How musical theatre has developed from the early twentieth century to the present day.
- How historical, social and theatrical contexts influence musical theatre.
- How to identify stylistic characteristics within unfamiliar listening extracts.
- How composers adapt traditional musical forms for the theatre.
- How to analyse songs and scenes using detailed score study and listening skills.
- How to construct high-quality 10-mark responses and 30-mark comparative essays.
- How to apply knowledge confidently to unfamiliar musical theatre works in the A Level examination.

We will develop/practise skills including:

- Listening critically to identify the stylistic features of different musical theatre composers.
- Annotating scores using sophisticated analytical vocabulary.
- Comparing composers, musicals and compositional techniques.
- Analysing Musical Elements, orchestration and dramatic structure.
- Identifying vocal styles, accompaniment techniques and orchestral colours.
- Applying historical, cultural and theatrical context to analytical observations.
- Developing aural skills through regular unfamiliar listening practice.
- Writing perceptive analytical and evaluative essays supported by musical evidence.
- Developing confidence in recognising compositional styles across a wide range of repertoire.
- Applying musical terminology accurately when discussing both familiar and unfamiliar works.

Your Teacher will assess your knowledge by:

- Regular retrieval practice and knowledge quizzes.
- Listening and Appraising activities.
- Annotated score analysis.
- Unfamiliar listening exercises.
- AQA-style 10-mark analytical responses.
- Section C 30-mark comparative essays.
- Wider listening tasks and listening diary reviews.
- Mock examination questions covering both familiar and unfamiliar musical theatre extracts.
- End-of-unit assessments focusing on stylistic understanding, context and extended writing.

You could learn more about this topic by:

- Listening to complete musicals by the five named composers.
- Comparing different stage productions and professional recordings.
- Researching the historical development of musical theatre from Broadway to the West End.
- Reading librettos alongside listening to the music.
- Using the **AQA A Level Music ZigZag Guides** and wider listening resources.
- Completing wider listening to additional works by each composer beyond the prescribed repertoire.
- Keeping a listening diary to record stylistic features, musical elements and contextual observations.

Kurt Weill - The Threepenny Opera (1928) **1.** Mack the Knife **2.** Pirate Jenny Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny (1930)
Richard Rodgers - Oklahoma (1943) **3.** Oh What a Beautiful Morning **4.** Lonely room **5.** Oklahoma. Carousel (1945)
Stephen Sondheim - Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (1979) **6.** The Ballad of Sweeney Todd **7.** A Little Priest **8.** My Friends **9.** Johanna **10.** Into the Woods (1987) **11.** On The Steps of the Palace **12.** Agony **13.** Giants in the Sky **14.** Last Midnight
Claude-Michel Schönberg - Les Misérables (1980; English version 1985) **15.** At the End of the Day **16.** One Day More **17.** Master of the House **18.** Miss Saigon (1989) **19.** I Still Believe **20.** I'd Give my Life for you **21.** Bui Doi
Jason Robert Brown - Parade (1998) **22.** This is not Over Yet **23.** All the Wasted Time **24.** The Last Five Years (2001) **25.** Still hurting **26.** Moving Too Fast **27.** See I'm Smiling

A LEVEL MUSIC: Musical Theatre

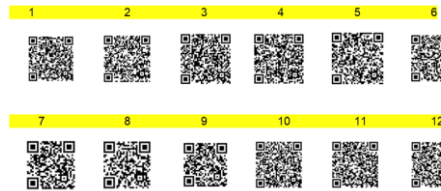


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Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes: Musical Theatre, Broadway, West End, Integrated Musical, Concept Musical, Book Musical, Leitmotif, Underscoring, Recitative, Dialogue, Ensemble Number, Ballad, Character Song, Verse-Chorus Form, Strophic Form, Ternary Form, Introductory Verse, Coda, Modulation, Sequence, Cadence, Tonality, Extended Chords, Altered Chords, Slash Chords, Bare Fifths, Bitonality, Syncopation, Swing Rhythm, Rubato, Rallentando, A Tempo, Melodic Contour, Tessitura, Belt, Falsetto, Syllabic, Melismatic, Conjunct, Disjunct, Countermelody, Homophonic Texture, Polyphonic Texture, Colla Voce, Portamento, Glissando, Arco, Pizzicato, Orchestration, Characterisation, Dramatic Irony, Underscore, Reprise, Motif, Theme and Transformation.



AQA Study Guide



A LEVEL MUSIC: 20th Century Art Music



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Learning about this topic is important because: This unit introduces you to some of the most influential and innovative music of the twentieth century. You will explore how composers responded to war, politics, religion, technology and changing artistic movements through increasingly diverse musical styles. Through detailed score study, listening and contextual analysis, you will investigate how composers challenged traditional ideas of melody, harmony, rhythm, tonality, texture and structure to create new musical languages. You will develop the ability to identify stylistic characteristics in unfamiliar extracts and communicate perceptive musical judgements using sophisticated musical vocabulary.

This builds on: The study of Romantic Piano Music, Mozart Opera, Music for Theatre, Minimalism, the Musical Elements, listening and appraising skills, score analysis and contextual understanding developed throughout the course. Students build on their understanding of historical musical development whilst exploring the dramatic stylistic changes of the twentieth century.

This leads to: Final synoptic revision across all Areas of Study, unfamiliar listening, extended essay writing and preparation for the AQA A Level examination. This unit also develops a wider understanding of contemporary composition, modern performance practice and twentieth-century musical aesthetics.

We will learn:

- How twentieth-century composers challenged traditional musical conventions.
- How Shostakovich, Messiaen, Reich (and MacMillan) each developed distinctive compositional styles.
- How political, religious, philosophical and technological influences shaped twentieth-century music.
- How harmony, rhythm, texture, tonality and timbre evolved throughout the twentieth century.
- How techniques such as minimalism, serial influences, modes of limited transposition, additive rhythm and polyrhythm are used.
- How orchestration, instrumentation and new technologies contributed to new musical styles.
- How to identify stylistic characteristics within unfamiliar twentieth-century listening extracts.
- How to analyse complex scores using sophisticated musical vocabulary.
- How to compare composers, techniques and stylistic developments across the century.
- How to construct perceptive 10-mark analyses and 30-mark evaluative essays using musical evidence.

We will develop/practise skills including:

- Listening critically to identify stylistic features of twentieth-century music.
- Annotating complex scores using accurate analytical terminology.
- Comparing the compositional styles of Shostakovich, Messiaen and Reich.
- Analysing melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, tonality, structure and orchestration in depth.
- Recognising advanced compositional techniques including ostinato, additive rhythm, modal writing, non-functional harmony and minimalist processes.
- Applying historical, political and cultural context to analytical observations.
- Developing aural skills through regular unfamiliar listening practice.
- Writing sophisticated analytical and evaluative essays using evidence from the score.
- Recognising relationships between musical techniques and expressive purpose.
- Applying stylistic knowledge confidently to unfamiliar twentieth-century works.

You could learn more about this topic by:

- Listening to additional works by Shostakovich, Messiaen, Reich and MacMillan
- Comparing performances of the prescribed works by different orchestras and ensembles.
- Studying the historical contexts of the Second World War, the Cold War, modernism and post-modernism.
- Researching electronic music and developments in recording technology.
- Using the AQA A Level Teacher Guide, ZigZag Guides, anthology scores and wider listening resources.
- Following full scores whilst listening to professional recordings.
- Completing wider listening and unfamiliar score analysis to strengthen stylistic recognition.

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 30-mark evaluative essays comparing composers and styles.
- Unfamiliar twentieth-century listening exercises.
- Mock examination questions based on unfamiliar extracts.
- End-of-unit assessments covering both prescribed works and wider listening.
- Synoptic revision activities linking all Areas of Study.



AQA Study Guide



Shostakovich:
Symphony No.5



Shostakovich: String
Quartet No.8



Shostakovich Piano
Concerto



Messiaen: Turangalila
Symphonie



Messiaen: Quartet
for the End of Time



Reich: Different
Trains



Reich: Music for 18
Musicians

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes: Minimalism, Process Music, Phase Shifting, Looping, Cells, Motif, Ostinato, Additive Rhythm, Polyrhythm, Polymetre, Metrical Displacement, Modes of Limited Transposition, Whole Tone Scale, Octatonic Scale, Hexatonic Scale, Pentatonic Scale, Birdsong, Non-functional Harmony, Cluster Chords, Tone Row, Serialism, Atonality, Modality, Bitonality, Polytonality, Static Harmony, Pedal Point, Drone, Harmonic Rhythm, Timbre, Texture, Layering, Ondes Martenot, Prepared Piano, Extended Techniques, Aleatoric, Graphic Notation, Socialist Realism, Modernism, Expressionism, Canon, Counterpoint, Augmentation, Diminution, Palindrome, Retrograde, Inversion, Transformation, Sound Mass, Electronics, Sampling, Reverb, Delay, Tape Loop,

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.

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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