

# A level Music

## Why study Music?

- Music is a highly regarded A Level amongst universities.
- An excellent grounding in music to prepare you for music degrees.
- Varied lessons and activities due to the 3 contrasting principal components: performing, composing, appraising. 60% of the course is completed before the final exam period.
- Excellent for self-confidence with ample performing opportunities and the chance to work with other talented music students.
- Making music with others improves your interpersonal and communication skills and looks great on your CV!



## Why study Music at Solihull Sixth Form College?

- Ideal class sizes: 8-12 students is typical and provides a good balance between getting individual help from the teacher whilst allowing for collaboration and group work
- The College finances lessons for one instrument or voice. Up to £17 for a 30-minute lesson and up to 28 half-hour lessons for a Year 12 student (23 for a Year 13 student). This equates to £476 in Year 12 and £391 in Year 13.
- There is a series of concerts throughout the year at the College. Each year the Heartfield-Wharam competition allows students to compete for £150 prize. Students often perform at other College events such as the Awards Evening.
- All students take part in choir and other ensembles.
- The department is very well equipped with the latest Apple Macs running the most recent Logic X and Sibelius software. These are used extensively for composing work. Students can access the computer lab at any time during the day
- There is a well-equipped studio where students will learn the basics of recording.
- There are 3 practice rooms available for students to practise and compose in as well as several pianos including a grand piano in the theatre.
- An experienced accompanist is available to rehearse student performances for both the A level performances and any external exams.
- Students' musical education is supplemented with ABRSM theory grades: exam entry paid for by the College. (All students do grade 5 theory if not taken, with option to continue to higher grades).
- Many of our students go on to study music at conservatoire or university

### Case Study

Among the recent successful students to have taken this course is **Polina Savicka**.



She came to the College from Woodrush High School to study A levels. She achieved A\* grades in Music and English Language and an A in French. She has progressed to Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance to study Composition.

*"I enjoyed the music concerts that the College held and Music enrichment, where all Music students gathered together. I also found the Learning Resource Centre and the library helpful for study. It is where I felt most focused and motivated."*  
- student Polina Savicka

## Course Outline

### Unit 1: Performing 30%

Students perform one or more pieces in a concert at the College lasting for a minimum of 8 minutes.

### Unit 2: Composing 30%

This is organised in two parts:

- 1) A composition either to a brief or a free composition (40 marks)
- 2) A chorale harmonisation in the style of J.S.Bach (20 marks)

Both parts must last in total at least 6 minutes.

### Unit 3: Appraising 40%

A two-hour and ten-minute examination in two parts, covering a wide range of music genres, each with two or three set works.

Section A: Areas of study and dictation (50 marks)

- Three questions related to the set works (audio and skeleton score provided).
- One short melody/rhythm completion exercise.

Section B: Extended response (50 marks)

- Two essay questions – essay one (20 marks) and essay two (30 marks)
- Essay one asks students to draw links from their study of the set works to the music heard as an unfamiliar extract.
- Essay two gives a choice of four questions that ask students to evaluate the musical elements, context and language of one set work. Each option will be from a different area of study.

## Assessment

Performance (30%) – completed during the course and externally examined.

Composition (30%) – completed during the course and externally examined. This is completed during the course under controlled conditions at College.

Appraising exam (40%) - externally examined.

Examining Board – Pearson.

## Special Entry Requirements

Grade 4 or above in GCSE Music, if taken. Playing an instrument/singing to Grade 5 standard or above is essential: a certificate confirming achievement of at least Grade 5 must be brought to interview. Students who believe they are at this standard but have not yet passed the exam can audition at enrolment instead. Students need to be able to read stave notation (treble and/or bass clef) fluently. An interest and open-minded approach to all styles of music, as well as an ability to compose and write about music (to GCSE standard) would help. These requirements are in addition to our standard A level entry requirements - see [www.solihullsf.ac.uk/courses/entryrequirements](http://www.solihullsf.ac.uk/courses/entryrequirements).

## Prohibited Options

None.

## What do our students go on to do?

Studying Music at university or conservatoire, Performing, Teaching, Music Therapy, Music Technology, Librarianship, Media work – especially broadcasting.

## Cost Implications

Students will need to buy a copy of the Edexcel AS/A Level Anthology of Music published by Pearson to annotate. These will be available from the College at £40. The book contains scores for all the works studied over both years.

## Complementary Subjects or Enrichment Courses

There is a wide variety of Enrichment courses on offer and Music students are expected to become fully involved in the musical life of the College. In particular all music students must take part in the College choir which provides essential aural training.

### Examination Results

In the past three years, there has been great success for students on this course, as follows:

Year	Entry	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	A-E%
2019	8	1	0	2	2	3	0	0	100.0%
2020	9	2	0	5	1	1	0	0	100.0%
2021	5	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	100.0%

### Contact

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