

# A LEVEL MUSIC

## Preparation Work

As with GCSE, the A level course consists of three elements: performing, composing and appraising. The tasks below are designed to help you prepare for these three areas of the course.

### PERFORMING

Prepare a solo performance on an instrument of your choice (including voice). The performance should be approximately 3-5 minutes in length and ideally of at least Grade 6 standard.

The performance will take place during the first two weeks of term.

### COMPOSING

Compose a short extract of music in a style of your own choice. You can write for any combination of instruments.

You should compose a minimum of 16 bars of music. It can be presented either in score notation or as a recording.

Some suggestions for composition ideas might include:

- A short piece for your instrument or for a small group of instruments
- The chorus of a song
- A short piece to set a scene or create a mood (film music)

### APPRAISING

#### Theory

You should be working at a standard of at least Grade 5 in Music Theory. If you have not studied Grade 5 Music Theory, please use the website <https://www.musictheory.net/lessons>. You should read through the website and make sure that you are familiar with all the sections under 'The Basics', 'Rhythm and Metre', 'Scales and Key Signatures' and 'Intervals'.

## Music History

You will need to have an understanding of the history of Western Art Music (Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and 20<sup>th</sup> Century).

The Classic FM website is great starting point: <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/periods-genres/>

Please have a look at the website and listen to a range of work from each period to get a feel for the style and musical features.

Complete a listening log with brief notes / bullet points on at least two pieces of your choice from each period.

## Set Work Study (Film Music): Batman Returns, Birth of a Penguin Part I

Watch the following video clip, which is taken from one of the A level Set Works:

[Batman Returns \(1992\) - 'Birth of a Penguin/Main Title' scene \[Part I\]](#)

This video clip is taken from the opening of the 1992 film 'Batman Returns'. The storyline surrounds the Cobblepot family at Christmas time. Mrs Cobblepot gives birth to a 'monster' baby whose aggressive behaviour leads the parents to keep him in a cage. Eventually, out of desperation, the parents throw him over a bridge into a sewer. Please bullet point how the music (composed by Danny Elfman) reflects and enhances the storyline. Consider the elements of music - tonality, harmony, melody, rhythm, texture and instrumentation – in your response.