

# Music

Music is integral to everything we do at Northampton High School. We believe in both nurturing musical excellence and making music accessible to all. The department puts on concerts throughout the year that allow the very best musicians to flourish. Music as part of everyday school life is also vital.

*“Music has changed my life for the better.” - Mariam, Year 13*

A large proportion of students use the newly refurbished practice facilities, allowing classical musicians to practise in a soundproofed room and popular musicians to record their work in one of our studios.



## Key Stage 3

Music during Key Stage 3 provides a unique balance between academic rigour and practical music making. Lessons focus on developing fundamental techniques on a wide range of instruments and learning to play music of various genres in ensembles. Pupils learn how music of all types is related and study the key elements of styles that combine to create similarity and differences. Performances often include improvisatory sections and require students to develop compositional techniques.



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# Key Stage 4

GCSE Music at Northampton High School follows the 9-1 Edexcel specification. This course requires students to be examined across three musical disciplines; performance, composition and analysis. Performance and composition are assessed under controlled conditions during lesson times. Students must perform one solo piece and another as part of an ensemble. The recordings take place during the academic year of assessment. The composition element of the course involves using music technology to produce two contrasting pieces of music. Students are taught compositional techniques during lessons. The final examination takes place in June and students listen to fragments of the eight pieces of music that they have studied for two years, and are asked to make comment on the musical elements heard.

# Key Stage 5

A Level Music follows the Edexcel specification and is weighted similarly to the GCSE course. Students are required to perform, compose and analyse music. The performance standard necessary is equivalent to a minimum of Grade 7 ABRSM. Two compositions are submitted from each student. One assesses compositional techniques and the second is a free-choice submission. The final exam requires students to write two essays analysing musical elements of complex pieces of music, and also to listen to extracts of studied pieces and identify elemental modulations. The A Level course demands an extremely advanced level of musicianship and a very high percentage of our students progress to study Music at universities and conservatoires each year; 100% in 2018 and 75% in 2019.

Both GCSE and A Level musicians benefit from an annual 'composition recital'. This concert provides a platform for the stunning work that has been produced during the course to be heard by family and friends. The composition work is interspersed with live performances and is enjoyed by younger musicians too.



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