

How useful is Music A Level ?

Music helps you to develop a variety of skills such as analysis, dedication, group skills, self confidence and self-reliance, as well as providing a means of artistic expression and relaxation. Plus it stretches your imagination and playing an instrument also makes you think and react quickly. **Skills such as these are not just prized within music careers, they are valuable to all types of employers.**

Music is a highly regarded academic subject and whether you take it with a view to a career in music or as an additional A level subject, it is held in high esteem by universities and other institutions of higher education. Most people, however, study Music because they love it and you will have plenty of practical opportunities to develop your talents.

What our students think !

“I am really glad I took music at Aquinas - the opportunities with the orchestra and practical side to the course ensured it was enjoyable whilst the more theoretical side was clearly explained and study skills were developed. I would recommend it to any prospective student.”

“I have really enjoyed this subject and have had a fantastic time being part of the orchestra. The support given by my teacher has been amazing whether related to the actual course or to do with (practical) music lessons. I would recommend anyone thinking about taking this subject to do so, and if you play an instrument join the orchestra.”



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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AQUINAS COLLEGE

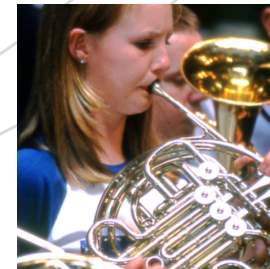
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Music

Information



What are the Entrance Requirements ?

You will need to have either a GCSE in Music or be of a Grade V standard on your chosen instrument/theory. We do require that all students who take AS/A2 Music continue to have instrumental lessons and take part in at least one extra-curricular musical group.

Why should I choose Aquinas ?

Aquinas is consistently at the top of the league tables for this area. The music department encourages the same high pastoral and academic standards found in all areas of college life. We have an excellent pass rate and our results are always above the national average. We try to create an environment which is relaxed and friendly, where you will be motivated to work hard under the guidance and support of staff. You may find that the atmosphere in lessons is quite informal, but we've found it gets the best results for us!

What will I study on the course ?

AS LEVEL

Unit 1 - Performing. You will perform one or more pieces of your choice either as a solo or as part of an ensemble. The total performance should last between five and six minutes and any instrument or voice is acceptable for this unit.

Unit 2 - Composing. This area of the course requires you to look at the way music is composed. You will compose a three minute piece that may be for any instrument or voice or combination of instruments and/or voices. You will also be able to choose the style of your composition. Once your piece has been completed you answer questions to produce a CD sleeve note to accompany the composition. For this part of your course you will have weekly group and individual lessons with a member of staff who is a professional composer. We have both the Sibelius score writing package and Cubase sequencing software which may help you with this area of the course.

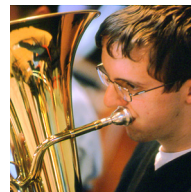
Unit 3 - Developing Musical Understanding. This unit concerns listening to music and understanding how it is constructed. You will explore the main elements of music and will have to show that you can write informatively about a variety of pieces of music.

A2 LEVEL

Unit 4 - Extended Performance. This unit gives you the opportunity to extend your performance skills as a soloist and/or as part of an ensemble. You are free to choose music in any style and for any instrument or voice. The complete performance should last for between twelve and fifteen minutes and provide a balanced programme of music.

Unit 5 - Composition and Technical study. This unit has two sections: Composition and Technical Study. The Composition section further develops your composition skills, leading to the creation of a final three-minute piece to a chosen brief. The Technical Study section builds on the knowledge and awareness of harmony gained in Unit 3.

Unit 6 - Further Musical Understanding. This unit concerns listening to and writing about music, familiar and unfamiliar, and understanding how it works. Set works provide the focus for much of the unit and you learn how to compare and contrast pairs of excerpts, contextualise music, and identify harmonic and tonal features.



Can I have instrumental lessons ?

Yes ! You may already have an instrumental teacher, in which case you won't need to change. However, if you need a new one we have an excellent team of visiting teachers. All of our teachers are highly qualified and work hard to establish good relationships with students. They will always be available to guide you through the practical parts of your course.

What about general music making ?

There are lots of opportunities to get involved in music.

Musicals: You can take part in musicals such as Little Shop of Horrors, Grease and Cabaret. You can try for a main part, join the chorus or play in the band. Alternatively, if you don't like the limelight you can get involved backstage.

Swing Band and Choir: You don't have to study music to be involved in these groups. If you're enthusiastic and enjoy playing music, that's all that matters. Come along to rehearsals and try it out.

Small Ensembles: Aquinas has a percussion group and a choir which plays at college concerts and other functions. There are also a number of rock bands which rehearse in college. If you don't play in a band but would like to, you can set one up - you might never look back!

Workshops: As a music student you will take part in workshops with professionals from leading classical and jazz organisations such as the Halle Orchestra. This will provide valuable opportunities to work alongside professional musicians. Recent projects include jazz and salsa workshops, plus master classes with professional pianists and brass players.