Music Technology A Level

Board: EDEXCEL, Specification 9MT0

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Why choose Music Technology?

If you are a musician interested in sound production, or a wannabe music producer looking to create polished and professional sounding mixes, then music technology A Level is for you. It is a highly creative course where only true musicians with a good ear and an ability to manage their own time succeed.

- You MUST have some keyboard skills (not 'qwerty').
- You will need an interest in all styles of music.
- A keen ear is also required for success on this course.

The course

- Hands-on experience of using up to date equipment.
- Learning about sound recording/capture.
- MIDI theory, manipulation and possibilities.
- Synthesis theory and applications.
- Gaining a full and broad understanding of all popular music styles.
- Pushing the boundaries of composition and sound design.

Course Content and Assessment
Component 1 (20%) NEA
Recording

Using contemporary recording and production techniques, produce one recording, chosen from a list of 10 songs provided by Pearson which will consist of a minimum of five compulsory instruments and two additional instruments. The song and instrument list will be released by the exam board on 1st June in year 12.

Component 2 (20%) NEA –
Technology-based composition

Having learnt about audio manipulation and sampling techniques, here you put them to the test.

You get a choice of three composition briefs to choose from which will be released on 1st September of year 13. Each brief has a specific challenge and you have to fulfil all of the criteria whilst creating an original and engaging musical composition.

Component 3 (25%) Exam
Listening and Analysing

This externally assessed exam will test your knowledge of recording and production techniques and principles as well as demonstrating your knowledge of the development of recording and production technology.

This exam will be sat at a computer where you will be given a CD which will contain recordings of commercially available works. You will need to answer the questions in the examination booklet which will relate to these recordings. You will be wearing headphones to listen to the music.

There are 2 sections to the exam. Section A consists of smaller fact based questions on 4 unknown commercial recordings. Section B will consist of two essays on the final two recordings on the CD.

This exam lasts 90 minutes.

Component 4 (35%) Exam
Producing and Analysing

This exam is sat at a Digital Audio Workstation where you will also have to assemble tracks in audio and MIDI, edit tracks together and complete practical and written tasks. At the end you have to produce a final polished mix to be assessed as well as write an extended essay on a production idea, technique, mixing scenario or hardware/FX unit.

This exam lasts 2 hours and fifteen minutes with 10 minutes of setting up time.

Where next?

There are the obvious links to the sound industry. This can be a stepping stone to a career in: sound engineering (studio and live), studio production, composing, music performing, sound design for theatre and film/TV, engineering, computer programming and more! Music technology is all about working to very important deadlines on your own. Students feel very proud and pleased when they meet these deadlines, knowing the work they have produced is to the best of their ability. This skill alone will benefit you at any stage of your life. Ex-RSA students have gone onto work in the music industry, set up their own recording studios and business, designed mixing desks for large manufacturers, had songs played on Radio 1 and toured the Far East and Europe.

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