

Component 1: Performing

Internal and External Assessed Performances

Over the next two years at King Edward VI, you will follow a programme of assessed performances that will help you to prepare your final A Level Performing Exam, which is assessed by a visiting examiner.

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Type and length of performance</i>	<i>Programme</i>	<i>Expected standard</i>
Initial performance	November Year 12	3-4 minute recorded performance	One (or more) pieces, with one related to an AoS*	approx. Grade 5-6
Internal Exam	Easter Year 12	5-8 minute recorded performance	Two (or more) pieces, with one related an AoS	approx. Grade 5-6
A Level Mock Exam (35% - Option A)	January Year 13	11-12 minute recorded recital	Three (or more) pieces with TWO related to different AoSs below	approx. Grade 6
A Level Mock Exam (25% - Option B)	January Year 13	7-8 minute recorded recital	Two (or more) pieces, with one related to an AoS below	approx. Grade 6
A Level Exam (35% - Option A)	Easter Year 13	11-12 minute performance to an external examiner	Three (or more) pieces with TWO related to different AoSs below	approx. Grade 6
A Level Exam (25% - Option B)	Easter Year 13	7-8 minute performance to an external examiner	Two (or more) pieces, with one related to an AoS below	approx. Grade 6

* Depending on what option you take, one or more of your pieces will have to relate to the main Areas of Study covered in the specification. In the table over the page, these Areas of Study (AoSs) are outlined along with some clarification. The areas can be interpreted fairly broadly, but there are definite boundaries beyond which you cannot go, particularly when selecting a programme for Option A, which needs to cover TWO Areas of Study. Consult with your instrumental teacher and Tom Pankhurst for guidance if you are at all worried.

Areas of Study for performance

A	Western Classical Tradition	Any piece from the early Baroque (ca. 1600) to the late Romantic (ca. 1900)
B	Rock and Pop	For the purposes of performance, this area of study covers any piece of popular music (but not Musical Theatre or Jazz) written since about 1950. It also covers styles not ordinarily considered pop such as folk music.
C	Musical Theatre	Any piece taken from the Musical Theatre of the twentieth or twenty-first century
D	Jazz	Any jazz piece from ragtime through to contemporary jazz and styles which fuse jazz with other genres.
E	Into the Twentieth Century	These two areas of study cover any piece of music written since 1900 that is clearly part of (or has strong links to) Western Art Music (what is informally referred to as 'classical' as distinct from popular styles of music). Music from non-Western and folk traditions are not covered by these AoSs.
F	Into the Twenty-first century	

You do need to make sure that you understand what is needed and plan very carefully. Please keep the following points in mind:

- Ensure that your programme is AT LEAST one minute longer than the minimum. **Performances that are under length will receive ZERO MARKS** and students sometimes play faster when under pressure.
- It is much better to play pieces that are well within your capability than to struggle with more difficult ones (see marking criteria below). Although some extra marks are given to pieces that are grade 7 or above (never more than three extra marks out of 36), the emphasis is on playing accurately, musically and giving a really convincing overall performance. If you battle through unnecessarily difficult music, you will not achieve this. There is NO BENEFIT to playing music that is harder than grade 7, although any piece that you can play very comfortably is obviously fine.
- At least one piece must be a solo item (being accompanied by a piano or a backing track counts as a solo. The remaining piece(s) may, if you wish, be performed as part of an ensemble. You should take into account, however, that you will be more reliant on others and that it is not always easy to assess the grade level of ensemble music.
- Do not plan to take graded exams too close to your final performance in April 2019 UNLESS the programme involves the same music. Remember that you may well be working on harder repertoire for graded exams than will be appropriate for your A Level performance and it might therefore be difficult to manage this problem.. For example, if you are taking grade 8, is it very likely that music at grade 7 standard or lower is more appropriate for your A level. Graded exams are designed to push you to the next level and the way in which they are marked reflects this. A level performance exams do not have this purpose – the idea is to assess your technique and musicianship at the

highest possible level of perfection. **Graded exams are important, but it is your A level grade that is your passport to the university of your choice.**

- Do not plan to rehash old pieces on minimal practice whilst you mostly concentrate on new more difficult repertoire. If you do revisit Grade 6 pieces that you have played before, come to them fresh – improve your tuning, tone and accuracy, turn them into a real performance, in which you can really communicate the music to your audience (much easier to do if the pieces are well within your grasp)
- If you are a jazz musician, you might consider offering an improvised performance for one or more of your pieces. Such performances must be based on a written lead sheet or other stimulus.

Performance Studies Planner and Performance Listening Journal

In January 2018 you will work on planning your performance studies so that you achieve the best possible result in your A level. It is really important that you and your teacher take this process seriously and plan very carefully when you are going to concentrate on A level preparation and when you are going to focus on other exams and repertoire. It is vital that you get this right as it could make up as much as 35% of your final mark.

Your planner will include:

- Your programme for the internal exam at Easter
- A review (in conjunction with your teacher) of your strengths and weaknesses
- Your plans for any graded exams that you may take
- Your provisional plans for your programme for year 13
- Some targets for the rest of the year
- A list of recordings to listen to including pieces you are planning to play and performers from whom you might take inspiration

Performance Schedule

(see Internal and External Assessed Performances on page 8 for details of exact dates)

Event	Date
Programme submission and photocopies* for initial performance	October Year 12
Initial Performance (3-4 minutes)	November Year 12
<i>Performance Plan</i> submission (plus programme and photocopies for Internal Exam)	January Year 12
Internal Exam (5-8 minutes)	May Year 12
<i>Performance Plan</i> Review (including final decision on whether to take Option A or Option B)	June Year 12
<i>Performance Listening Journal</i>	September Year 13
Programme submission and photocopies for A Level Mock Exam	November Year 13
A Level mock Exam	January Year 13
Revised programme submission and photocopies for A Level Exam <i>Updated Performance Listening Journal</i> submission	February Year 13
A Level Exam	Easter Year 13

* Photocopies need to be submitted as follows:

- Singers – two photocopies of your music
- Pianists, guitarists, keyboardists and drummers – one photocopy of your music
- All instrumentalists needing a piano accompaniment – one copy of your accompaniment and one copy of your solo part
- Jazz instrumentalists – copy of your lead sheet or stimulus

These deadlines are in place to make sure that you get the best possible mark in this component, which is worth 30% of your marks. **Students not submitting forms and accompaniments on time will be considered as being behind in their work and put on Cause for Concern.**

Performing Assessment Criteria

An external examiner gives each piece a mark out of 36 by awarding marks across three criteria up to a maximum of 12 as outlined below. It is important that you understand these criteria so that you can choose pieces that will allow you to get the best possible marks.

Criterion One – Accuracy (out of 12)

To achieve Band 4, the top band, for this criterion (10-12) you must play **accurately** and **fluently at an appropriate tempo** and **follow performance directions** that are notated in the score. Although you are allowed to embellish melodic lines in a stylistically appropriate way (e.g. in Baroque or Jazz music in particular) the examiner will ultimately be assessing your performance against the score or lead sheet that you have provided.

This criterion is one third of your marks for this component, which is why is so important to play a piece in which you are 100% secure. If you play a more difficult piece in which notes or rhythms are inaccurate or for which you cannot sustain a fluent performance you will be very heavily penalized. Band 2, which is half marks or less (4-6), is described as a performance that is ‘sometimes inaccurate in pitch and/or rhythm’.

Graded exams (e.g. ABRSM and Trinity) and music festivals do not place such a heavy emphasis on complete accuracy, so students sometimes find that they do much less well in their A level assessments than they have done on the same piece in an exam or festival.

Criterion Two – Technical Control (out of 12)

To achieve Band 4 for this criterion, you have to sustain a ‘**sophisticated technique**’, your intonation much be **totally secure throughout**, and you need to show a **fully developed tone quality** and projection that is ‘used effectively with subtle variations’.

In order to achieve this standard you need to play pieces in which you are in complete technical control, NOT pieces which are at the edge of your ability. You also need to make sure that you choose pieces in which it is possible to show a range of different techniques and tone qualities and which require some subtle variation, otherwise it is very difficult to hit the top band.

Criterion Three – Expression and Interpretation (out of 12)

To achieve Band 4 for this criterion you need to demonstrate **a mature understanding** of the period and style, **communicate sensitively** and show a **sophisticated rapport** with other performers.

In order to achieve this, you will have to work really hard with your teacher to grasp the style of your pieces, listening to performances of them and to performances of other music in the same style, so that you really understand the music that you are playing.

Overall a performance in the top band must be **sophisticated and persuasive** and this will only be possible if you are in full technical control of the pieces that you are playing.