

LEAVING CERTIFICATE MUSIC

Music, from earliest times, has been an important expression of human creativity. Today it is a valued social and cultural art form that transcends language and religious and racial barriers.

In modern life, music serves many functions:

- Music is a worthwhile accomplishment for its own sake - an education for life
- Socially shared musical activities help develop personality skills and co-operative effort
- Music education engages actively and imaginatively the affective, cognitive and psychomotor aspects of human development
- Musical creativity, linked with competence and enterprise, provides life and employment opportunities
- Music has an important role to play in the economy, both nationally and internationally

Music is offered as a choice subject at Leaving Certificate level and there are five periods a week given to the study of music.

The syllabus follows on directly on from the Junior Certificate where the three essential activities of performing, composing and listening are central to the structure of the syllabus. The syllabus is structured so that students can specialise in one of the three areas above by selecting one of them as a 'higher elective'. Each section is worth 25%, and students then select one of the three activities to be worth 50% and do an extra course of work in this area. The vast majority of students choose their practical exam to be worth 50% of the exam. This takes place around Easter in Sixth Year.

PERFORMING SKILLS

As with the Junior Certificate, students may sing or play an instrument and can perform individually or as part of a group.

The genres that the students can present their practical through are very flexible and include classical, traditional, rock, jazz and musicals. Music technology can also be offered as part of the performance examination in which students edit a music score using appropriate software that is installed on three computers in the Music Room. The practical exam is worth 200 marks for those who choose it as their elective.

COMPOSING SKILLS

Students will learn the skills necessary to compose a 16 bar melody that includes a modulation to a related key and do a harmony exercise that demonstrates an understanding of chord progressions and cadences.

The composition paper totals 25% (100 marks).

LISTENING SKILLS

The listening course contains prescribed works, Irish Music and Aural skill development.

The Listening paper is worth 25% (100 marks) and all students must study the four set works prescribed. They need to understand, identify and describe the musical features used, study style and historical context and analyse and describe patterns of repetition and change in the music. In the Irish Music section students will study the dances, instruments and players associated with Irish music and the traditional and non-traditional features of performances. Throughout fifth and sixth year there is an emphasis in the classroom on the development of aural skills through unprepared listening exercises that cover all styles and genres.

WHAT DO STUDENTS LIKE ABOUT LEAVING CERTIFICATE MUSIC?

- Students like the fact the course is a direct follow on from the Junior Certificate course and builds on knowledge previously learnt.
- Students particularly like the fact that the practical exam (if chosen as their elective) is worth 50% of the marks. They also like the fact it takes place separately to the written state exams as it takes place around Easter time. The Leaving Certificate Practical marking scheme is based on what a student could achieve after five years class-based experience.
- Students like the variety of aspects and material in the course.

CAREER POSSIBILITIES

Music is useful for:

- media work or studies,
- primary teaching,
- sound engineering,
- public relations,
- library work,
- speech therapy,
- film,
- physical education,
- communications,
- production,
- performance and music at third level.