

Music at Maynooth Post Primary

Mission Statement

The Music Department strives to foster each student's interest in and appreciation for music by offering a broad and engaging curriculum, both in class and through co-curricular activities. It promotes active, enjoyable involvement in a wide variety of musical experiences, including solo performances, choir participation, traditional Irish music ensembles, school musical productions, and pop/rock groups.



Music students are encouraged to stay actively involved in our co-curricular music programmes throughout their years at the school, helping them grow their skills and enjoy the full range of musical opportunities we offer.

The Music Department prepares students for the state examinations at both Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate levels and provides TY students with a programme designed to build their musical appreciation and performance skills in keeping with the overall goals of Transition Year.

The Music Department also aims to build strong cross-curricular connections with other subject areas, including English, Irish, History, the various foreign language departments and Wellbeing.



Overview



Staff

Jonathan Hanlon (Subject co-ordinator,
Director of School Choir)

Kate Heffernan (Subject co-ordinator,
Director of Traditional Irish Music Group)

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Junior Cycle Music

Subject Overview

The Music syllabus is designed to offer a well-rounded music education by giving students the knowledge, skills, and practical experience that match their age, abilities, needs, and interests.

Content

The Junior Cycle Music specification is designed to help students build their musical skills, understanding, and cultural awareness by engaging with music both practically and intellectually. Learning takes place through three connected strands—Procedural Knowledge, Innovate and Ideate, and Cultural and Context—giving students a wide range of musical experiences as they move through the junior cycle.

The syllabus supports flexible teaching approaches and allows teachers to choose from a broad variety of musical styles, eras, and genres. It is also structured to accommodate mixed-ability classes, with all students completing a Common Level examination.

Assessment

The Junior Cycle places strong importance on using assessment to support students' learning. In Music, students complete two Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in 2nd and 3rd year. CBA 1 involves creating a composition portfolio, while CBA 2 requires students to prepare a Programme Note. These assessments encourage students to reflect on their work and take an active role in their learning. They also help students agree on clear success criteria, which are then used by themselves, their peers, and their teacher to review the quality of their work.

For the final Common Level examination, students complete both a practical and a written exam. The practical exam accounts for 30% of the total marks, while the written exam makes up the remaining 70%.

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Senior Cycle Music

Subject Overview

The Leaving Certificate Music syllabus builds naturally on what students have learned at Junior Cycle, keeping a similar overall structure and aims. It provides students with the musical knowledge, skills, practical experience, and attitudes suited to their stage of development, interests, and abilities. The course is designed to meet the needs of all learners, including those who may wish to continue studying music after school.

Content

The syllabus is built around three connected areas of musical learning: performing, composing, and listening.

For the performing element, students can choose from a wide range of solo and group performance options.

In the composing strand, students may complete set composition exercises, or—at higher level—submit an original composition as part of their assessment.

The listening component covers music from various eras, styles, and genres. Students explore:

1. Prescribed works
2. Irish music
3. Aural skills
4. Special study topic (option at higher level only)

Students have the option to focus on one of the three main areas of musical study. The flexible structure of the syllabus enables them to devote up to 50% of their work to the area that best reflects their strengths and interests.

Teachers can draw on a wide range of materials and methods, and all musical styles and genres are welcomed.

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The syllabus is also designed to support mixed-ability classes. Ordinary Level students complete tasks suited to their stage of musical development, while Higher Level students complete similar activities at a more advanced level, along with additional work in their chosen specialist area.

Assessment

Leaving Certificate Music is offered at both Ordinary and Higher levels. Students are assessed through a practical performance exam—completed individually or in groups—and through a combined written and listening exam that covers composing and aural skills. Higher Level students who choose composing as their specialist area also submit samples of their composition work for assessment.



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