

Unit 18: Modern Music in Practice

Unit code:	L/600/6994
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit is designed to enable learners to gain a broad knowledge of modern music grounded in practical experience of rehearsing and performing relevant works.

● Unit introduction

The term 'modern music' is used here to refer to music written in western 'art' music tradition from 1900 through to today. It includes impressionist, neoclassical, serialist, minimalist, experimental and electro-acoustic styles of music. It also includes current contemporary work that is fundamentally important to this unit. It does not include 'pop' music, 'world/folk' music or 'classical' music, although it has influenced and been influenced by these forms.

Modern music is an important expressive art form in contemporary western culture. It has arisen from radically experimental ideas that seem to reject the traditions of classical music. In its attempt to explore and challenge the boundaries of what music can be, modern music presents us with evidence that compositional rules are often imposed in hindsight. It is the success of experimental ideas that shape the direction of new music's evolution. Modern music can also express existing ideas in a new and engaging way, hence the term 'neo'. Whether purely experimental or reworking existing ideas, modern music will give the learner an insight into the challenges that have faced composers of each generation, and the challenges facing those who could perform works based on brand new ideas.

The unit will enable learners to engage with the profession from a position of knowledge and experience and will enhance their employability. Learners will be able to specialize as a soloist and will be required to perform a variety of styles as ensembles. Preparing and distributing programme notes for their performances will further evidence that learners can put their knowledge and understanding into practice.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know how modern music developed
- 2 Know how to create programme notes
- 3 Be able to perform modern music as a soloist
- 4 Be able to perform modern music as part of an ensemble.

Unit content

1 Know how modern music developed

Historical: Pre-1945 eg impressionism (Debussy), serialism (Schoenberg, Berg, Webern), neoclassicism (Stravinsky, Poulenc, Britten); Post-1945 eg postmodernism and conceptualism (Cage), electro-acoustic and music concrète (Schaeffer, Stockhausen, Varèse), minimalism (Riley, Reich, Glass), contemporary eg neo-romanticism (Corigliano, Del Tredici), new complexity (Dillon, Ferneyhough), accessibility (Górecki, La Monte Young, Adams, Nyman, Eno)

Musical language: techniques eg serialism (Schoenberg, Second Viennese School), use of chance/indeterminacy (Cage, Xenakis), extended instrumental techniques (Berio)

Texture: eg new instruments (ondes Martenot, Messiaen, prepared piano, Cage), electronic, manipulated and amplified sound (Stockhausen)

Tonality: eg polymodality (Bartok), atonality; bitonality (Ives, Stravinsky), accessibility (Glass, Reich, Adams)

2 Know how to create programme notes for a concert

Context: historical (who commissioned it, first performance, context amongst the composers output); relevance today

Musical: narrative and descriptive overview of the entire piece; analytical detail of special features of musical language; comparisons to other works of the composer and genre

3 Be able to perform Modern music as a soloist

Styles: selection of a style appropriate to ability; stylistic accuracy

4 Be able to perform Modern music as part of an ensemble

Styles: selection of repertoire appropriate to ability; stylistic accuracy

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe, with reference to examples, how music developed in the modern era [IE, RL]	M1 explain, with reference to examples, how music developed in the modern era	D1 comment critically, with reference to examples, how music developed in the modern era
P2 create programme notes for a concert that describe the performance pieces [IE, RL]	M2 create programme notes for a concert that explain the performance pieces	D2 create programme notes for a concert that comment critically on the performance pieces
P3 perform pieces from the modern idiom as a soloist with errors that do not detract from the overall performance [IE, SM]	M3 perform pieces from the modern idiom as a soloist competently and accurately	D3 perform pieces from the modern idiom as a soloist with artistic flair and interpretation
P4 perform a variety of pieces in a modern idiom as part of an ensemble with errors that do not detract from the overall performance. [TW, EP]	M4 perform a variety of pieces in a modern idiom as part of an ensemble as a soloist competently and accurately.	D4 perform a variety of pieces in a modern idiom as part of an ensemble with artistic flair and interpretation.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators
------------	--	---	--

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

The ethos to this unit is similar to '*Classical Music in Practice*'. However, teachers need to recognize that some learners are likely to be less familiar with twentieth century composers than modern composers. Therefore there may be an even greater need for exposure of relevant works in this units study.

To begin with, the first section of the unit will be delivered in the form of tutor-led dissemination of information, probably in a 'lecture' or classroom setting. It is important for learners to gain an overall view of modern music as quickly as possible so tutors should ensure that learners are taken to concerts as a normal part of their contact time. Programme notes should always be read at these events and sleeve notes in recordings to help prepare learners for creating their own programme notes.

Tutors will need to ensure that learners are progressively equipped with standard music vocabulary and terms in order to be able to describe the music with which they engage. In addition, extensive use should be made of exemplar recordings and scores from each of the periods, supporting learners' developing aural and score-reading skills. Learners should be provided with ample opportunities and be encouraged to discuss, develop and assimilate the unit content themselves. This might be through extended question and answer sessions (tutor and learner-led), seminars, discussions, learner-led presentations, etc.

One of the great advantages with this unit is that there is a wealth of contemporary music making going on in the community, both in academic and wider community settings. Links with local universities may prove very beneficial for electro-acoustic concerts and workshops. In addition, organizations like 'sound and music' (see links) assist with making contacts with contemporary composers for visiting lectures and workshops.

The development of the skills and knowledge needed to achieve grading criteria 3 and 4 will most likely take place in tutor-led practical music-making sessions, although these could also be learner-led, depending on the make-up of the group and available resources. Group listening, analysis and discussion of accessible relevant examples of music will support learners, but learners should be enabled to have a hands-on experience of the music being studied.

There is no requirement that complete works be undertaken. A single section, for example, would generate sufficient evidence for a relevant genre, as would part of a suite, a single aria or chorus, and so on. The pieces performed should be complete in itself, ie not simply an extract from a movement, for example in order to support learners' appreciation and experience of relevant structural elements.

Learners and their instrumental/vocal teachers will need to lead the decision making process for criterion 3 which is designed to allow performers the opportunity to specialize in an area in which they excel, or wish to investigate.

The tutor will need to ensure that the chosen works will provide a realistic challenge to the learners and allow the possibility of meeting the distinction criteria.

Learners should be encouraged to identify and make use of any relevant music they are learning for other purposes, such as graded exams or through participation in external music events: there is no reason why such material should not enable learners to achieve criteria 3 and 4, subject to its being assessable.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
General introduction to the unit.
Assignment 1: Article – P1, M1, D1
Write an article for a music magazine 'The development of Modern Music'.
Definitions and descriptions of the styles.
Examples that best highlight the differences between styles.
Stages in the evolution of modern music:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post Romantic impasse – the search for new musical resources• Technological developments – new possibilities• Effects of Globalisation through modern media• Influence of World Music.
How its evolution can be evidenced – musical language:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Techniques• Texture• Rhythm• Melody• Tonality.
Research into article writing – formats and styles.
Article writing.
Presentations.
Feedback.
Assignment 2: Solo Performance – P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3
How to write programme notes.
Guided research on specific pieces for programme notes and stylistic accuracy.
Workshops to develop awareness of style.
Rehearsals.
Performances.
Feedback.
Assignment 3: Ensemble Performance – P2, M2, D2, P4, M4, D4
Workshops with recordings/external groups to develop awareness of style.
Supervised rehearsals.
Performances.
Feedback.

Assessment

Learning outcome 1 can be evidenced as one article as suggested in the OLP. This work may lend itself to different phases of assessment. It could be broken up into a series of articles exploring each style one by one. Tutors should be careful not to assess based on the presentation of the article but the validity of the content. The initial assessment of these articles could take the form of formative assessment and learners could be given a second opportunity to present their work as a formal presentation.

Learning outcome 2 can be covered in both assignments 2 and 3. This does not need to be done this way but the advantage of assessing in both assignments is that learners will need to cover all of the eras within modern music this way, with an in depth and focused look at one.

Learning outcomes 3 and 4 will be covered in assignments 2 and 3. In the OLP the performances are assessed separately, but could be mixed depending on the needs of the centre. It is important that GC1 and 2 are completed before learners perform as this information will help provide a thorough understanding of the stylistic requirements and intricacies of the individual pieces.

To achieve P1, learners are required to describe with reference to examples in order to achieve. These examples can relate to those covered in class or extend beyond that; the intention here is to enable learners to make sense of the unit content by applying it to examples of their own choosing.

To achieve M1, learners are required to expand on their pass-level descriptions, unpicking the 'how' rather than simply giving the 'what' implied by P1.

To achieve D1, learners are required to 'comment critically' which in this case means to discuss the similarities and differences within the respective periods of music. This will help to create a comprehensive picture of how modern music has evolved. The notion of 'evolution' is fundamentally important and that development should also be plotted in terms of musical language and other factors listed in the unit content.

To achieve P2, learners must produce programme notes, describing the pieces in terms of their musical detail and their context in terms of the composer and the style.

To achieve M2, learners are required to produce programme notes that provide an explanation. This requirement means that the information should be thorough, for instance dates should be included for the pieces and composer should be supplied where appropriate.

To achieve D2, learners are required to produce programme notes that comment critically on the pieces to be performed. This means that there should be comparisons made with other works by the composer to contextualise the pieces qualitatively. Comparisons can also be made with famous works by the composers peers, and its importance/contribution to the genre can be summarized.

To achieve P3, learners are required to play a number of pieces from one style within modern music. At this level, a performance that is stylistically correct but with minor flaws would achieve a pass.

To achieve M3, learners will need to produce a solid, competent performance with no noticeable flaws. This needs to be stylistically correct but may lack the flair and expressive qualities that would achieve a distinction.

To achieve D3, learners are required to produce performances of pieces that are stylistically accurate, technically accurate and demonstrate good expression and flair. An energetic and enthusiastic performance is required.

To achieve a P4, learners are required to play a piece from each era of classical music. At this level, a performance that is stylistically correct but with minor flaws would achieve a pass.

To achieve M4, learners will need to produce solid, competent performances with no noticeable flaws. This needs to be stylistically correct but may lack the flair and expressive qualities that would achieve a distinction.

To achieve a D4, learners are required to produce performances of pieces that are stylistically accurate, technically accurate and demonstrate good expression and flair. An energetic and enthusiastic performance is required.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Article	Writer for the BBC Music Magazine.	A magazine article(s) – The development of modern music.
P2, M2, D2 P3, M3, D3	Solo Performance	Working as a contemporary performer, renown for their specialism.	A performance of three pieces (of 6 to 10 minutes).
P2, M2, D2 P4, M4, D4	Ensemble Performance	Working as a member of an ensemble for paid functions or the concert hall.	A performance of three pieces (of 6 to 10 minutes).

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Music and Music Technology sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Music and Music Technology suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	Solo Musical Performance	Music and Society
	Working as a Musical Ensemble	Music Performance Techniques
	The Development of Music	Music Theory and Harmony
		Singing Techniques and Performance
		Working and Developing as a Musical Ensemble
		Classical Music in Practice

This unit also has links with the following National Occupational Standards:

Music Business (record labels)

- MBI Produce promotional material for the music business.

Essential resources

Rehearsal space for both individual and group sessions is paramount. Teachers need to be able to observe and interact during rehearsals, and also peer evaluation where possible. Recordings, scores and a place for listening is essential too for delivery and assignment work. Opportunities to take learners as a group, to concerts is very important and can be built into the study of the unit.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Links with local performers and organisations could prove extremely useful for performances and for vocational insight. Performers could give workshops and instrumental teachers could be involved in some sessions where their specialisms allow.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Cook N and Pople A (editors) – *Cambridge History of 20th Century Music* (Cambridge, 2004)
ISBN 978-0521662567

Griffiths P – *Modern Music and After: Directions Since 1945* (Oxford University Press, 1995)
ISBN 978-0198165118

Nyman M – *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond (Music in the Twentieth Century Series)* (Cambridge University Press, 1999) ISBN 978-0521653831

Ross A – *The rest is noise. Listening to the Twentieth Century* (fourth estate, 2008) ISBN 978-1841154756

Whitall A – *Exploring Twentieth Century Music* (Cambridge, 2003) ISBN 978-0521016681

Radio stations

BBC Radio 3 (90-93 FM)

Classic FM (100-102 FM)

Websites

www.allmusic.com

Online music encyclopaedia

www.naxos.com

Classical record label

www.soundandmusic.org

Arts council body formed by merging SPNM and Sonic Arts network and others

www.soundjunction.org

Music Composition and development site, from the Associated Board

Magazines

BBC Music Magazine

Gramophone

New Notes Magazine

Event

Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival – www.hcmf.co.uk

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	researching for and writing articles researching for and writing programme notes
Reflective learners	writing articles writing programme notes
Team workers	rehearsing in an ensemble participating in workshops
Self-managers	rehearsing
Effective participators	rehearsing in an ensemble participating in workshops.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	choosing their own repertoire
Creative thinkers	presenting their work via articles and formal presentation
Reflective learners	watching video evidence of their performances and evaluating their work
Team workers	choosing repertoire as a group.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	research for article writing
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	multiple search criteria for analysis of pieces for performance
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	article development and formatting in publisher
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	presentation of information from articles as a summary (PowerPoint)
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	presentation of information from articles as a summary (PowerPoint)
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	presentation from articles
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	research and writing of articles and programme notes
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	research and writing of articles and programme notes.