# Unit 6: Classical Music in Practice

**Unit code:** J/600/6895

**QCF Level 3:** BTEC National

**Credit value:** 10

**Guided learning hours:** 60

● **Aim and purpose**

This unit is designed to extend learners' knowledge of classical music grounded in practical experience of rehearsing and performing relevant works.

● **Unit introduction**

The term 'classical music' is used here to refer to music written in the western 'art' music tradition, from the renaissance period (from around 1400) through to the beginning of the twentieth century (1901). It includes renaissance, baroque and romantic periods of music as well as music from the classical period associated with Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. It is a formalised music and can be compared with other classical traditions from world genres. It covers genres such as orchestral, concert, chamber, church and operatic music. It does not include 'pop' music, 'world/folk' music or 'modern' music, although it has influenced and has been influenced by these forms.

Music for film and television, background music for public spaces, and music for theatre all draw heavily on classical music traditions and forms, as does music for the concert hall, opera house, church and home. Learners will be able to recognise how the great romantic composers such as Tchaikovsky or Wagner influence orchestral film soundtracks and how the scale and structure of chamber music informs so much composition for television and theatre.

This unit will be of interest to learners seeking both to broaden their knowledge and experience of classical music and to understand the classical music they hear. Part of this unit's study involves a grounding in the development of classical music. Learners will engage with the music from a position of knowledge and experience. The primary focus of work in this unit will be the 'practice' element. Learners will put classical music into practice, performing as soloists and in ensembles. They will be able to specialise as soloists and will be required to perform a variety of styles as ensembles. Preparing and distributing programme notes for their performances will provide 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 classical music developed

2 Know how to create programme notes

3 Be able to perform classical music as a soloist

4 Be able to perform classical music as part of an ensemble.

# Unit content

## 1 Know how classical music developed

*Historical*: religious roots of formalised music; separation from the church; patronage; impact of publishing, the impact of technological development; development of composers' financial and artistic freedom

*Periods*: renaissance; baroque; classical; romantic

*Musical language*: form (binary, ternary, rondo, sonata); texture (monophony, homophony, polyphony); harmony (diatonic, modal, chromatic)

## 2 Know how to create programme notes

*Context*: historical (eg 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

## 3 Be able to perform classical music as a soloist

*Periods*: specialise in one of the four periods listed (renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic); stylistic accuracy (performers must play within an accepted style but not necessarily on period instruments)

## 4 Be able to perform classical music as part of an ensemble

*Periods*: one from each of the four periods listed (renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic); stylistic accuracy (performers must play within an accepted style but not necessarily on period instruments)

# 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 through the renaissance, baroque, classical and romantic periods [IE, RL] | **M1** explain, with reference to examples, how music developed through the renaissance, baroque, classical and romantic periods | **D1** comment critically, with reference to examples, how music developed through the renaissance, baroque, classical and romantic periods |
| **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 in an appropriate style as a soloist with errors that do not detract from the overall performance [IE, SM] | **M3** perform pieces in an appropriate style as a soloist competently and accurately | **D3** perform pieces in an appropriate style as a soloist with artistic flair and interpretation |
| **P4** perform a variety of pieces from the classical repertoire as part of an ensemble with errors that do not detract from the overall performance. [TW, EP] | **M4** perform a variety of pieces from the classical repertoire as part of an ensemble competently and accurately. | **D4** perform a variety of pieces 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 | RL – reflective learners | SM – self-managers |
|---|---|---|---|
| | CT – creative thinkers | TW – team workers | EP – effective participators |

# Essential guidance for tutors

## Delivery

The unit requires learners to develop a useful understanding of the music of the renaissance, baroque, classical and romantic periods and a practical application of that understanding. This understanding will be evidenced as written work and performances.

To begin with, the first section of the unit could be delivered in the form of tutor-led dissemination of information, probably in a 'lecture' or classroom setting. However, tutors should ensure that as early as possible learners are taken to concerts and encouraged to go to as many performances as possible. Programme notes from these events and sleeve notes in recordings should always be read to help prepare learners for creating their own programme notes.

Tutors will need to ensure that learners are 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 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.

The development of the skills and knowledge needed to meet learning outcomes 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 have hands-on experience of the music being studied.

There is no requirement that complete works be undertaken, eg a whole symphony. A single movement, for example, would generate sufficient evidence for a relevant period, as would part of a suite, a single aria or chorus, and so on. Each piece 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 learning outcome 3 which is designed to allow performers the opportunity to specialise in an area in which they excel, or wish to investigate.

The tutor will need to ensure that the chosen works provide a realistic challenge for learners and allow them to meet 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 this music should not enable learners to meet learning outcomes 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: Write an Article for a Music Magazine – P1, M1, D1** |
| Definitions and descriptions of the periods. Examples that best highlight aspects of development. Factors influencing its evolution – cultural<br><br>• roots in religious music<br><br>• separation from the church<br><br>• patronage<br><br>• publishing<br><br>• technological development<br><br>• emerging financial independence of artists and impact on music making.<br><br>How its evolution can be evidenced – musical language<br><br>• form<br><br>• harmony<br><br>• stylistic features<br><br>• texture.<br><br>Research into article writing – formats and styles. Article writing. Presentations. |
| **Assignment 2: Solo Performance – P2, P3, M2, M3, D2, 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. |
| **Assignment 3: Ensemble Performance – P4, M4, D4** |
| Workshops with recordings/external groups to develop awareness of style. |
| Supervised rehearsals. |
| Performances. |

## Assessment

Learning outcome 1 requires that learners demonstrate knowledge of how classical music developed. This can be evidenced as one article as suggested in the outline learning plan. Tutors should be careful to assess on the validity of the content rather than presentation.

It is not possible for learners to cover all features of development in great detail for each and every period so they must instead offer a balanced overview from Renaissance to Romantic.

Learning outcome 2 requires a focus on the individual pieces for performance. Again, this work has a vocational relevance and directly relates and prepares learners for the workplace/concert hall.

Learning outcomes 3 and 4 are similar in nature to other performance units, but one of the key factors here is that learners need to demonstrate a sense of stylistic accuracy. It is important that content for LO1 and LO2 are taught before the concert as this knowledge will 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 classical music has evolved. The notion of 'evolution' is fundamentally important and development should 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 period.

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 the name of the composer, and opus numbers (or their equivalent) should be given 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 composer's peers, and importance/contribution to the genre can be summarised.

To achieve P3, learners are required to play a number of pieces from one period of classical 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 and technically accurate and which demonstrate expression and flair.

To achieve P4, learners are required to play pieces from different periods 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. They need to be stylistically correct but may lack the flair and expressive qualities that would achieve a distinction.

To achieve D4, learners are required to produce performances of pieces that are stylistically and technically accurate and which demonstrate expression and flair.

**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 Pearson assignments to meet local needs and resources.

| Criteria covered | Assignment title | Scenario | Assessment method |
|---|---|---|---|
| P1, M1, D1 | Write an Article for a Music Magazine | You are a writer for the BBC *Music* magazine. | A magazine article(s) – the development of classical music from the Renaissance to the Romantic. |
| P2, M2, D2<br><br>P3, M3, D3 | Solo Performance | Working as a classical performer producing professional programme notes for your performance. | A recording of a performance of three pieces (or 6 to 10 minutes). Programme notes, word processed and presented in an appropriate format (eg a booklet). |
| P4, M4, D4 | Ensemble Performance | Working as a member of an ensemble for paid functions. | A recording of a performance of three pieces (or 6 to 10 minutes). |

## Links to other BTEC units

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 |
|---|---|---|
| | | Music and Society |
| | | Music Performance Techniques |
| | | Music Theory and Harmony |
| | | Singing Techniques and Performance |
| | | Working and Developing as a Musical Ensemble |

## Essential resources

Rehearsal space for both individual and group sessions is paramount. Tutors need to be able to observe and interact during rehearsals. Recordings, scores and a place for listening are essential for delivery and assignment work.

## 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.

## 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<br>researching for and writing programme notes |
| Reflective learners | writing articles<br>writing programme notes |
| Team workers | rehearsing in an ensemble<br>participating in workshops |
| Self-managers | rehearsing |
| Effective participators | rehearsing in an ensemble<br>participating in workshops. |

Although PLTS opportunities 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 | researching for article writing |
| Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose | using 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:<br><br>• text and tables<br><br>• images<br><br>• numbers<br><br>• records | article development and formatting in publisher |
| Bring together information to suit content and purpose | presenting information from articles as a summary (PowerPoint) |
| Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience | presenting 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 | presenting from articles |
| Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions | researching and writing articles and programme notes |
| Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively | researching and writing articles and programme notes. |