

Board	Level	Set study	Chapter
EDEXCEL	GCSE	Moby: 'Why Does My Heart Feel So Bad?'	6
		Jeff Buckley: 'Grace'	6
<p>In addition to the song analysis of the set Moby track in Chapter 6, a study of Fat Boy Slim's techniques from the same chapter will be helpful when approaching Moby's compositional techniques. Both artists use the manipulation of samples as the basis for the construction of their music.</p>			
AQA <i>(Note that these pieces are for suggested study, not set works)</i>	GCSE	The Beatles: 'She Loves You'	2
		The Rolling Stones: 'I Can't Get No Satisfaction'	2
		Cream	3
		Led Zeppelin: 'Stairway To Heaven'	4
		Kanye West: 'Gold Digger'	7
		Rihanna: 'Take A Bow'	7
<p>In the AQA GCSE, Popular Music of the 20th/21st centuries is one of the three Strands of Learning. The musical elements that are required to be explored in the Areas of Study are consistently referenced in the musical examples throughout the book. The specification suggests a study of Cream and Led Zeppelin, and the analysis of 'Stairway To Heaven' in Chapter 4 will prove helpful. The delivery of variations in timbre through technology is also covered in many chapters, and is required under the heading Organisation of Sound in the specification. Also, the rap style of Kanye West and the R&B vocals of Rihanna both find resonances in Chapter 6 where hip hop and melismatic vocals are looked at in detail. These relate to both melodic line and rhythm, and, when combined with the song analysis of tracks by these artists in Chapter 7, will give students insight into the musical language used.</p>			
OCR	GCSE	Bee Gees: 'Night Fever'	4
		Gloria Gaynor: 'I Will Survive'	4
<p>The Area of Study 3 for OCR GCSE requires students to study the characteristic features and rhythmic patterns associated with the music of improvised modern dance, together with the impact of technology on the genre. In Chapter 4 the analysis of the two classic tracks that are set by the board will help with this. The specification also requires knowledge of the relationship and roles of music and instruments in pop ballads. The analysis of Elton John's 'Your Song', in Chapter 4, is relevant here as is Usher's gentle R&B song, 'U Remind Me', in Chapter 7.</p>			
WJEC	GCSE	The Police: 'Every Breath You Take'	5
<p>The WJEC GCSE Area of Study 4 looks at popular music through aspects of form and the implementation of musical devices. Examples of these can easily be found in the book and the appendix provides a listing of these. In particular, The Police's 'Every Breath You Take' is cited as indicative listening.</p>			
EDEXCEL	AL	The Beatles: 'A Day in the Life'	3
AQA	AL: AS	AS: Development of Reggae	3 and 4
	AL: A2	Rock, Pop and Fusion : genres and text setting	throughout
OCR	AL: A2	The Beatles: <i>Sergeant Pepper's</i> , Queen: <i>A Night at The Opera</i> , Norah Jones: 'Not Too Late'	3, 4 and 7
WJEC	AL: AS	Queen: 'Killer Queen' and 'Bohemian Rhapsody'	4

Music Technology GCE Advanced and Advanced Subsidiary

Edexcel Music Technology AS has a section on popular music styles and here the book will compliment Jonny Martin's excellent study guide* with the kind of listening analysis expected at this level. It will also provide a historical perspective of the developments in Music Technology since the 1950s.

Questions on the Listening and Analysing paper at AS level combine traditional musical notation questions with identification of musical style and recognition of studio effects and mixing. This is also the approach adopted by the musical examples in the book which can be used either as answer sheets or simply practice listening. They often highlight a particular producer's production techniques with examples of actual equipment used whenever possible. Students working on their own recordings will also benefit from this information and may even be able to duplicate some of the approaches adopted by the various bands through the decades. For example, the use of a tape echo (or digital emulation of one) is likely to improve the sound of a recording that sets out to emulate the sound of the 1950s, whereas a spacey digital reverb combined with sustain is more appropriate for the Mark Knopfler guitar solo in 'Brothers In Arms' (see Chapter 5).

BTEC National Level 3

Unit 30 Pop Music in Practice (2010 onwards) of the BTEC National course contains learning outcomes that, alongside the practical task, feature knowledge of pop music's different genres and requires an understanding of how pop music developed. This book is a rich source of information in both these areas and can be used as a resource for research projects and written work. By listening to the songs of the appropriate musical examples from the book the text can aid understanding of the characteristics of the many varied genres and how song styles and structures developed over time. The studio production techniques used as technology developed through the decades are also featured along with the social context and music industry changes that are important to the BTEC approach. Students could be asked to produce presentations, with small groups concentrating on a different sub-genre, e.g. funk/prog rock/singer-songwriters, or on electronic instruments e.g. Hammond organ/synthesisers/samplers, or record producers e.g. Phil Spector/Quincy Jones/Trevor Horn/George Martin.

* available on www.musicroom.com – search for RHG316.

General Listening Activities

Exercises in listening can be devised for students to improve their aural discrimination. For example the 22 bars that serve as an introduction to the Pet Shop Boys song, Heart, are set out in table form in Chapter 5. These could be used as the answer sheet to a blank table where members of a class are required to fill in what happens in each section, or place the following in the appropriate boxes:



It is recommended that when looking at the musical examples in the book students also listen to the song in question. It is ideal if the music can be paused at the appropriate time so that they can absorb the written information. Also, it would be beneficial to learning if some of the music scores can be played live, particularly by the students themselves. Guitar tablature has been added to help with this.

A project could be set up where students are asked to find examples in songs that illustrate the various guitar playing styles listed in Chapter 2, or the recording effects listed in Chapter 3. Comparative listening can also provide a useful approach and work such as listening to Elton John's 'Your Song' as analysed in Chapter 4 and the Ellie Goulding cover looked at in Chapter 7 can give an insight into different approaches to harmony, performance and production techniques. Additionally, hip hop sampling techniques provide a rich source of listening practice. Students could be asked to identify where an original musical phrase is used in a hip hop production and examples could be taken from the analysis of Fat Boy Slim's work in Chapter 6.

Composing

The book can provide ideas for creating music in a modern idiom. For example, composing music for instruments that you don't play is always a challenge. The idea behind the various sections on harmonica, guitar, drums, pop horns and synthesisers throughout the book is so that students can have an understanding of how these instruments work. This will lead them towards more idiomatic writing and most examination board mark schemes identify the appropriate handling of instruments as an important aspect of composing. Similarly the musical examples of melismatic singing styles in Chapter 6 can help focus the composer on a performance technique that is usually based on improvisation.

Composers are often looking for original ideas in terms of the musical elements. There are a number of musical examples in the book that look at unusual approaches to harmony. Modal harmonies are illustrated with The Zombies (Chapter 2). 'Strawberry Fields Forever' (Chapter 3) demonstrates some chromatic writing and 'Smash It Up' (Chapter 4) or the music of Blur (Chapter 6) provide some non-functional progressions. Rhythmic inventiveness can be found in the Madness track 'Uncle Sam' (Chapter 5) or the funky bass lines of Lauryn Hill (Chapter 6), and the interesting experimentation with textures from the electronic and hip hop genres are worth investigating (Chapter 6). Contrasting vocal textures are listed in the section on the Beach Boys (Chapter 3), with contrapuntal lines illustrated by The Beach Boys' 'Good Vibrations' and Radiohead's 'Paranoid Android' (Chapter 6).

All of the examples above and many others in the book can provide ideas to inspire a young person's creative work. Examination mark schemes for composition award marks for variety in texture and rhythm. Students can get so involved in the music they are writing that they fail to meet these requirements and this is where analytical listening in a pop idiom can help those composing in this style.

Pop music's use of musical elements can be traced in the appendix and this can be used for teaching and learning purposes.

Overview

Taking the book as a survey of the development of Pop music through six decades, students can acquire a sense of perspective which is sometimes missing when concentrating on individual composers or performers. It will prove relevant to both general musical studies and particular musical knowledge that is tested through the examination system.

David Ventura