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MUSIC

TEACHING AND LEARNING SYLLABUS

Pre-University

H3

Implementation starting with
2022 Pre-University One Cohort



Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

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CONTENTS

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	
• Philosophy and Purpose of Music Education	4
• Design of the Syllabus	4
• Syllabus Aims	5
• The Development of 21st Century Competencies (21CC) and Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE) through Music	5
2. CONTENT	
• Music Curriculum Concept	9
• Learning Outcomes, Knowledge, Skills and Values	10
• Content Overview	12
• Area of Study 1: Music Analysis	12
• Area of Study 2: Performance Practice	15
• Area of Study 3: New Media and Technology	17
3. PEDAGOGY	
• Recommended Pedagogies and Teaching Approaches	20
4. ASSESSMENT	
• Assessment in the Singapore Curriculum Philosophy	22
• Assessment Objectives	22
• Modes of Assessment	23

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Philosophy and Purpose of Music Education
Design of the Syllabus
Desired Outcomes of Education and 21st Century Competencies
Syllabus Aims

1. INTRODUCTION

Philosophy and Purpose of Music Education

Music is a universal human endeavour which exists in various contexts in all cultures. Music connects individuals and communities through the expression of thoughts and emotions, and develops our sense of aesthetics through multi-modal experiences.

Musical experiences enhance our lives and enrich our understanding of ourselves and other communities. At the individual level, music allows for dialogical meaning-making, where we could construct our worlds through our sense-making of humanity. Music is also a medium of self-expression, which enables the communication of personal feelings, ideas and experiences. At the community and societal level, music plays important roles in fostering social cohesion, strengthening social identities and national identity formation. It has the capacity to cross cultural and social boundaries, and builds our understanding of diverse cultures through time. Music education therefore contributes to the appreciation and renewal of Singapore's cultural heritage and traditions.

Our music education philosophy embraces the belief that all children are musical and seek to develop their sensorial abilities to empower them to appreciate and participate in music. This is aligned to the Singapore Curriculum Philosophy that supports the belief that every child wants to and can learn.

The Pre-University H3 Music curriculum allows students to acquire fundamental knowledge and skills of a range of analytical, inquiry and research methods, and aims to foster students' appreciation of inquiry as praxis to deepen their musical understanding and inform their creative practices as musicians. The H3 curriculum comprises both *taught* and *independent inquiry* components. The former outlines three Areas of Study (AoS) – *Music Analysis*, *Performance Practice*, and *New Media and Technology* – which allow students to be immersed in a broad range of historical and contemporary issues across musical cultures. The independent inquiry component develops students' capacity to think critically, creatively and reflectively through the process of inquiry, as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills in music research methodology. Both taught and independent inquiry components allow students to be engaged in aesthetic, affective and cognitive domains of learning, thereby deepening their appreciation and understanding of the rich complexities of music. The rigour of the curriculum also lays the foundation for further study in music at the tertiary level and endeavours to foster students' lifelong interest and involvement in music.

Design of the Syllabus

In conceptualising new directions for the A-Level H3 Music syllabus, the following principles were considered:

- The syllabus should remain relevant and current with developments and trends in music education, and also to students' interests and needs;
- The syllabus should build on disciplinary foundations of the Pre-University H2 Music curriculum;
- The syllabus should reinforce and promote the value of music in students' daily lives, and help students acquire future-ready skills and knowledge;

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- The syllabus is intentional in realising the value proposition of music in helping students develop 21st Century Competencies, achieve the Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE), and become future-ready and responsible digital learners, which is in alignment with the ICT Masterplan 4.

Syllabus Aims

The H3 Music syllabus aims to enable students to:

- Recognise the interdependence of inquiry and practice in music;
- Broaden and deepen interest and curiosity on a range of musical issues and perspectives that will inspire inquiry and inform practices;
- Foster critical thinking, creativity, and independent thought through inquiry in music;
- Communicate ideas, issues and perspectives effectively in a variety of modes;
- Inculcate good habits of mind in music inquiry and practices.

The Development of 21st Century Competencies (21CC) and the Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE) through Music

21st Century Competencies (21CC)

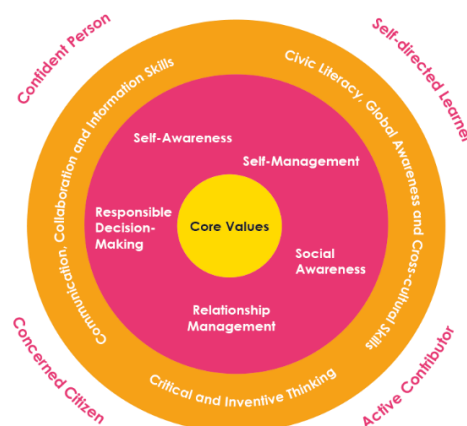


Figure 1.1 Framework for 21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes

Quality music education contributes to the inculcation of values, the development of social and emotional competencies as well as emerging 21st Century Competencies (21CC) in the following ways:

- **Core Values and Social and Emotional Competencies**

Music provides opportunities for the inculcation of values and development of social and emotional competencies.

Some musical works and writings examine topics and issues that allow students to delve deeper into the richness and complexities of the discipline. A facilitated discussion on issues related to music could allow students to voice and understand different perspectives by being open and non-judgemental, define shared values, and appreciate the value of collaborative

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thinking and relationships. Students also learn to negotiate unfamiliarity and ambiguity by navigating their emotions and viewpoints when they encounter new perspectives and/or examine sensitive topics.

Students' self-evaluation and reflection of their own musical works and musical processes enable them to inculcate a sense of self-worth and self-awareness.¹ By recognising and comprehending one's strengths and areas for improvement, students will learn to negotiate their thoughts and emotions throughout their creative journeys to achieve a well-grounded sense of self-efficacy.

Musical writings and works are intellectual properties of researchers, composers, songwriters, performers, music publishers and record labels. With the ease of access to research materials and musical products on the internet, students have to be reminded to treat these as intellectual properties and respect their terms of use. The music classroom is an ideal platform to discuss intellectual property rights relevant to music and related arts. This allows students to develop an awareness of and respect for music as intellectual property, who will then learn to consume, share and reference music responsibly.

- **Civic Literacy, Global Awareness and Cross-Cultural Skills**

Music is universal, cultural, and individual. The music created, past and present, are often a reflection of the beliefs, values and identities of people who conceived them, and the socio-cultural environment in which the music was and is shaped.

When students engage with music from Singapore and the world, they learn to appreciate and understand the cultures from which the music comes from and how the meanings behind help to shape identities. This in turn can contribute to developing students' own sense of identity as well as their awareness of local and global cultures.

- **Critical and Inventive Thinking**

Engaging in music inquiry requires one to respect, empathise and understand the unique viewpoints and behaviours of different people and cultures. The process of inquiry requires students to obtain information from a range of sources, both written and aural, from which they would observe patterns, make sense of tensions and contradictions, and relate musical perspectives and issues to larger concepts such as appropriation, representation, reception, and systems. This would enable students to arrive at critically-informed and enriched viewpoints of musical ideas and issues.

- **Communication, Collaboration and Information Skills**

Music fosters students' abilities to communicate through a variety of modes. In the H3 syllabus, students will consult diverse sources, evaluate the credibility of these sources as well as credit and reference sources accurately and appropriately as part of the inquiry process.

¹ Benton, Carol W. (2013). Promoting Metacognition in Music Classes. *Music Educators Journal*, 100(2), 52 – 59.

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Students then communicate their inquiry about music through writing, creating and performing.

When developing 21CC through music, teachers should identify and focus on key 21CC that naturally fit with music learning.

Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE)

Music also naturally aligns and leads to the DOE where students are developed to embody the following attributes:

- a **confident person** who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgment, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively.
- a **self-directed learner** who questions, reflects, perseveres and takes responsibility for his own learning.
- an **active contributor** who is able to work effectively in teams, is innovative, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks and strives for excellence.
- a **concerned citizen** who is rooted to Singapore, has a strong sense of civic responsibility, is informed about Singapore and the world, and takes an active part in bettering the lives of others around him.

SECTION 2: CONTENT

Music Curriculum Concept
Learning Outcomes, Knowledge, Skills and Values
Areas of Study

2. CONTENT

Music Curriculum Concept

The A-Level Music H3 curriculum seeks to develop musical understanding through the three Musical Processes of Listening, Creating and Performing. As illustrated in Figure 2.1 below, these three musical processes (i.e. centre of diagram) are core to the Curriculum Concept and are inter-related and inter-dependent in practice (i.e. the three overlapping circles).

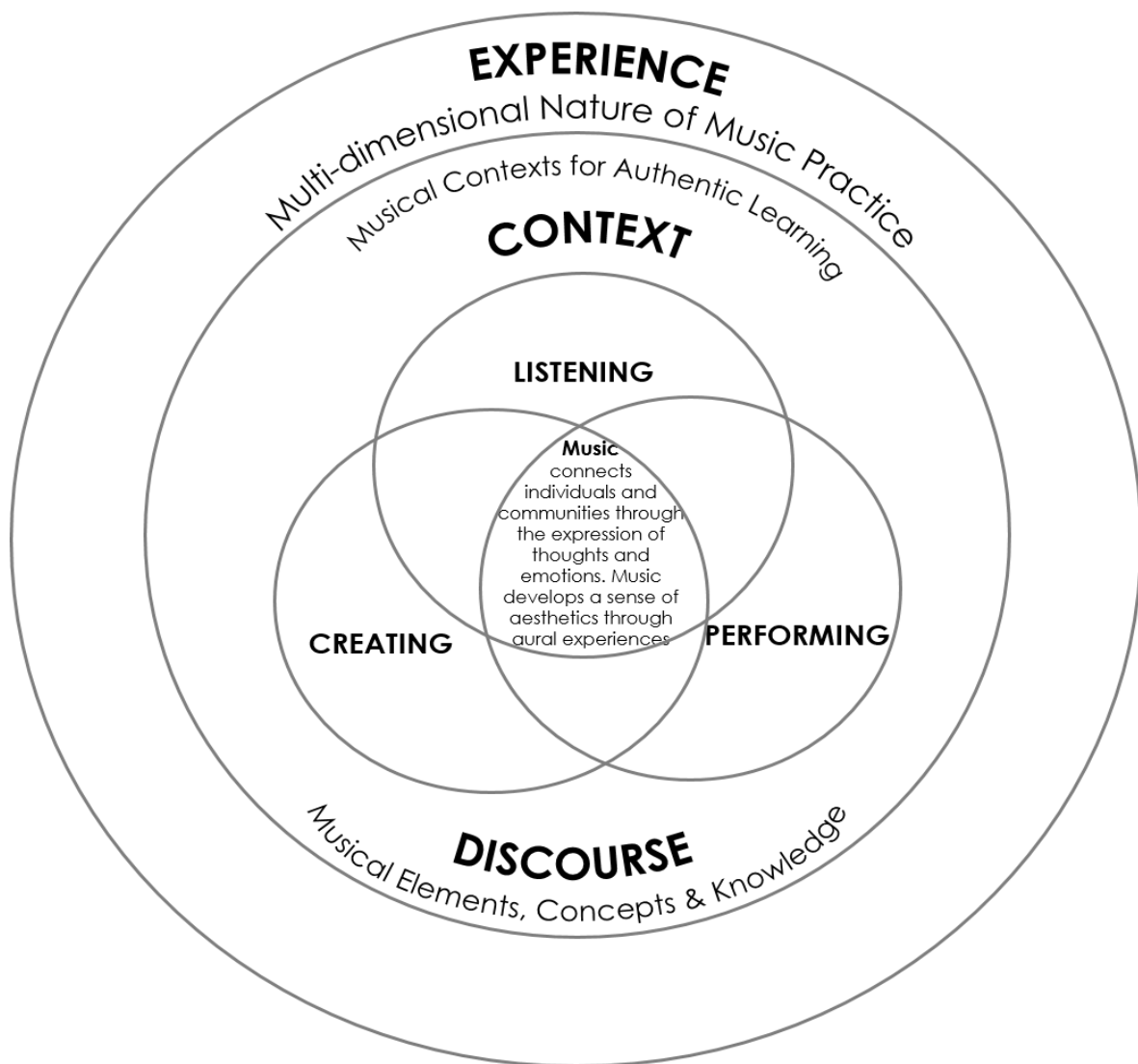


Figure 2.1: Music Curriculum Concept

Discourse and Context sit within the inner ring. Discourse is the means by which students engage in the three musical processes, and from and through them, engage in deep and authentic musical inquiry and research. Discourse also shapes musical thinking. Context provides the backdrop for an authentic learning experience. Both will interact with the core musical processes for meaningful music engagement and learning.

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The outer ring describes the **Experience** which the music learner is immersed in. Each musical experience is multi-dimensional and involves purposeful thinking and knowing, music-making and listening.² The student can experience music through its form or function, and from the different role he/she holds during the encounter, e.g. as an audience member, composer or performer.

Learning Outcomes, Knowledge, Skills and Values

At the end of the H3 Music course, students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the three Learning Outcomes (LOs):

Learning Outcome 1	Understand music through a range of issues and perspectives.
Learning Outcome 2	Analyse and Evaluate multiple perspectives and interpretations critically.
Learning Outcome 3	Communicate musical responses that articulate independent thought and are substantiated by research.

Table 2.1 illustrates the H3 Music Learning Outcomes (LOs)

LEARNING OUTCOMES	Knowledge, Skills and Values (KSVs)
<p>LO 1</p> <p>Understand music through a range of issues and perspectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of music from multiple perspectives: analytical; historical; performance-practice related; composers' discourse; and technology-related. • Open to multiple viewpoints in the understanding and interpretation of music.
<p>LO 2</p> <p>Analyse and Evaluate multiple perspectives and interpretations critically.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand music holistically from the perspectives of an analyst, creator, historian and performer. • Analyse and interpret music in depth using appropriate methodology or approach. • Evaluate and synthesise evidence and viewpoints from multiple perspectives and

² This is articulated by the Praxial philosophy of music education model. Elliott, D.J. (2005). Praxial music education: Reflections and dialogues. New York: Oxford University Press.

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	interpretations.
LO 3 Communicate musical responses that articulate independent thought and are substantiated by research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate critical inquiry, clarity of thinking, independent thought and creative imagination in writing, composition or performance.• Substantiate and communicate musical viewpoints.

Table 2.2 illustrates the specific Knowledge, Skills and Values (KSVs) that would help students achieve the Learning Outcomes (LOs).

CONTENT OVERVIEW

H3 Music comprises both **taught** and **independent inquiry** components.

The **taught** component explores the following three areas of music studies:

1. Music Analysis
2. Performance Practice
3. New Media and Technology

These three areas may be applied to the study of art, popular and/or world music across the domains of Listening, Creating and Performing. The taught component will equip students with fundamental sub-disciplinary understanding and attendant knowledge and skills, as well as awareness of a range of musical issues. Students can then explore and undertake an **independent inquiry** on a topic of their choice and interest. In the course of the study, students should understand the reciprocal relationship between inquiry and practice, and are encouraged to apply research knowledge to listening, analysing, creating, and/or performing music.

AREA OF STUDY 1: MUSIC ANALYSIS

Overview

Music analysis is the means of answering the question about *how music works* or *what it means*. The approach to Music Analysis in this syllabus is from a practical consideration of analytical techniques (i.e. the application of analytical methods to interpret music) rather than a theoretical one (i.e. the evaluation and comparison of analytical methods). Students will be introduced to a range of questions, analytical tools and procedures to investigate listening, creating, performing as well as social, cultural and historical related issues.

This Area of Study focuses mainly on two types of music analyses. The first type focuses on the music-sound event, where the structures and functions of musical elements and gestures shape the basis for musical understanding. In the investigation of Western art, jazz and popular music, students may be introduced to key melodic and harmonic analysis such as elements of voice-leading analysis, simple reductive processes, the concept of prolongation, and pitch-class set analysis. In the study of oral traditions, improvisation, and any form of recorded

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material, more commonly found but not limited to Asian music, aural analysis and/or the study of transcriptions, will reveal significant patterns and underlying structures pertaining to individuals or cultural groups.

The second type of analysis seeks to explore the meaning of music within their social, cultural, and/or political contexts. This could include the study of influences and borrowings from other art forms and/or cultures, and issues related to identity and ideology. Students could investigate a range of source materials such as score editions, concert programmes, advertisements, MTVs, recordings, arrangements, transcriptions of improvisations, oral and written interviews, as well as musicological and non-musicological writings by critics, composers, editors, scholars and performers to explore, through analysis, the meanings of music.

In the course of exploring this area of study, students are encouraged to take the perspectives of the analyst – composer, analyst – performer, and analyst – historian to see the connections across musical domains and consider their possibilities for application.

Suggested Scope

The list below is only suggestive and is non-exhaustive. While the fields are presented as individual parameters, the teacher can establish a focus on the interplay between them (e.g. pitch, rhythm, texture) and flesh out how these work together and are interweaved to generate the overall expressive gestalt.

Suggested fields for exploration:	Possible topics:
Structural Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventional forms and their reinventions: Sonata form; 2-part forms; 3-part forms; <i>Banshi</i> <i>Bianzou</i>; <i>Kriti</i>; Theme and Variations; Verse and chorus; 12-bar blues form; 32-bar AABA or ABAC • Form-building concepts and/or formal functions • Form as a process of musical development • Golden Section • Different concepts of form (e.g. Symmetry and Palindrome, Minimalism, Serialism and Integral Serialism, Aleatoric Music, Electroacoustic Music, Free Jazz Improvisation)

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Harmonic Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonic functions and chord progressions • Cadences • Voice-leading • Consonance and dissonance • Key relation and modulation • Pitch centricity • Scales and modes • Post-tonal and non-triadic harmonies • Cluster chords 	
Metrical and Rhythmic Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems (e.g. <i>tala</i>, colotomic structure, <i>banyan</i>) • Groupings (e.g. stress patterns, metric dissonances, polymetre, polyrhythm) • Temporal hierarchy (e.g. subdivisions, beats, bars, hypermetre) • Organising principles (e.g. non-retrogradable rhythm, isorhythm, rhythmic serialism, additive and subtractive rhythm, rhythmic modulation, phase shifts) 	
Melodic Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phrase structures • Motivic and thematic development • Variation • Refrain patterns • Ornamentation • Improvisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tessitura • Metaphor • Gesture • Topoi • Serialism and Integral Serialism
Timbral, Sound and Textural Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuning system • Scale and temperament • Texture (e.g. polyphony, micropolyphony, heterophony, homophony) • Extended techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acoustic spacing • Acoustic domains (e.g. time, frequency, amplitude, waveform, frequency ratios, periodic and non-periodic signals)

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Relationship between music and ideology / philosophy / religion / borrowings from other art forms etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ideology: social, cultural and political beliefs that influence music (e.g. Nationalism, Socialism)• Philosophies and practices of religions and their influence on music• Survey and application of principles in Art, Dance, Drama, Literature etc. in music
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AREA OF STUDY 2: PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

Overview

Performance Practice is the study of the way music is, and has been performed. In Western art music, the study of performance practice is generally approached through the study of treatises, dictionaries, instruction books, critical writings, iconographical material, actual instruments, editions of scores and recordings of music. A central objective of performance practice in any period is the endeavour to uncover historically accurate reconstruction of musical performances as well as to ascertain how much and what types of freedom composers intended for the performance of their works. In the 19th and 20th centuries, some musicians approached the performance of earlier music with the thought that it must be improved, for example, by performing it on modern instruments, and by adopting modern and/or contemporary forms of notation. Others investigated how earlier music might be performed in a manner that was faithful to the style of performance during the period in which the work was conceived. This approach was initially termed 'authentic performance' when the concept of *authenticity* gained traction in the 1980s but is today considered under the broader labelling of 'historically informed' performances.

The term, Performance Practice, is rarely used in world, jazz and popular music. The investigation of these types of music values the synchronic – the study of contemporary performance practices – as much as the historical. Students may survey these types of music in terms of a time period, geographical location, community, cultural area, lineage of performers among others. The study of such music involves examining current practices, eliciting oral histories, and analysing a range of sources (e.g. iconographic and written materials, recordings, scores and archaeological evidence) to understand music-making in historically, socially and culturally defined contexts.

Suggested Scope

The list below is only suggestive and is non-exhaustive:

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Suggested fields for exploration:	Possible topics:
Transmission, interpretation and improvisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study of different score editions, audio and/or visual recordings of a work • Transcription of orally-transmitted music • Interpretation/s of alternative notation for new music • Performance practices of improvised music
Performance in relation to organology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of contemporary and period instruments in performance • Organology, innovation in musical instrumental design and its effect on performance • Tuning and temperament
Socio-cultural contexts in music performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changing musical meanings and representations in performance across time and/or socio-cultural contexts
Performance in relation to spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance in different acoustic conditions • Performance in multimedia environment • Performance and stage settings

AREA OF STUDY 3: NEW MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

Overview

New Media and Technology have transformed the way music is produced, disseminated, and consumed in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The rise of broadcasting in the 1920s led to the birth of radio choirs, orchestras and bands for the performance of classical, jazz, popular and light music on radio networks. The invention of the personal computer in the late 1970s, the growth of the internet, and advancements in recording technology (from acoustic, to electrical, magnetic, and currently, digital), along with their corollary industries, are said to have produced a new era in music history. Examples of technological and new media inventions include the DAW, digital audio, digital instruments, film and television, web audio engines, video-sharing websites, mobile media and mobile software applications.

The creative interactions of musicians, technological equipment and/or new media have produced new forms of aesthetic expressions. For instance, audio mixing is often regarded as a form of performance whereby the audio engineer's mixing choices and techniques reflect his/her musical and emotional connection to the music. The capabilities of the recording studio and equipment can be perceived as the mixer's 'instrument'. The mixing process embraces a wide range of approaches that tap on elements of mathematics, physics, acoustics and sound manipulation (e.g. sampling, sound processing, use of electronic and electric instruments), enabling musicians to experiment with a wide spectrum of timbres and textures, and for new sound worlds to emerge.

Technology also changes the way composers, performers and studio engineers collaborate, communicate and present music. Collaborations may take place via cloud-based platforms, where musicians can upload their music (e.g. parts, loops) and invite other musicians in the online community to respond and co-create. Musicians have also explored modes of presentation apart from live performances on a physical stage, such as virtual presentations and hybrid formats combining live performances with pre-recorded material, thereby establishing new creative possibilities and relationships between sound, acoustics and the environment.

Suggested Scope

The list below is only suggestive and is non-exhaustive:

Suggested fields for exploration:	Possible topics:
Creative practices with technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating, improvising, and/or performing with new media and/or technology• Creative processes in music recording, arrangement, mixing, editing and/or mastering

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sound design
Relationship of technology with music/sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship between acoustic and electric/electronic/digital etc. instruments• Relationship between performance and audio post-production• Development of new instruments; development in instrumental design• Functions of technological tools in music analysis, creating and performing• Interdisciplinary collaboration through technology

SECTION 3: PEDAGOGY

Recommended Pedagogies and Teaching Approaches

3. PEDAGOGY

Recommended Pedagogies and Teaching Approaches

Learning through inquiry is central to the teaching and learning of the H3 Music Syllabus as it provides a framework for constructivist teaching and learning, which focuses on developing students' critical inquiry, independent thought, and proficiency at applying various modes of inquiry to inform their creative practice as musicians.

The use of an inquiry approach is intended to foster a mindset in students to be independently curious in their exploration of musical issues, so that their musical studies evolve into an ongoing journey of musical discovery through music which extends and endures beyond their years in school.

Learning through inquiry could take the form of various approaches, such as Problem-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning, and other forms of constructivist approaches to learning. These learning approaches engage students in discovery, problem-solving and collaborative learning that shifts the emphasis away from didactic instruction of stipulated content, to a more student-led process that uncovers content driven by their interest and readiness to learn. The common characteristics of the above inquiry approaches are illustrated below:

- Seeking and asking questions relating to the AoSs;
- Gathering and investigating information to answer identified questions;
- Exploring and developing ideas/concepts to make a personal response;
- Expressing an idea in a chosen form by using appropriate materials and techniques;
- Critiquing and deciding what to do next.

The inquiry process is, ideally, a seamless interplay of the above processes to explore, discover and build knowledge and skills about creative expressions and musical media. Students may be guided to explore musical questions and hypotheses through actual musical performance, improvisation, composing, listening and musical collaborations.

SECTION 4: ASSESSMENT

Assessment in the Singapore Curriculum Philosophy
Assessment Objectives
Modes of Assessment

4. ASSESSMENT

Assessment in the Singapore Curriculum Philosophy

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process, and must be closely aligned with curricular objectives, content and pedagogy. Assessment practices also have to be developmentally appropriate for learning to be effective. Both school-based assessment and national examinations play important and different roles in our education system. A balanced assessment system should have both Assessment of Learning (AoL) as well as Assessment for Learning (AfL). Whether implemented as national examinations or in the classroom, assessment should lead to meaningful learning. The 'what' and 'how' of assessment should be anchored on the clarity of purpose ('why'). There should be regular and meaningful gathering of quantitative and qualitative information about a learner's progress and development, and such information should be used to inform learning, develop thinking skills and dispositions in our learners, and shape future teaching and learning practices.

Assessment Objectives

The H3 Music Syllabus Assessment Objectives are as follows:

Students should be able to:

AO1 – Demonstrate musical understanding through the use of appropriate analytical, inquiry and/or investigative methods to acquire, select and synthesise knowledge.

AO2 – Demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate multiple perspectives from a range of sources by interpreting them within the larger social, cultural and historical contexts.

AO3 – Communicate with clarity well-substantiated research and meaningful musical responses that display independence of thought.

Modes of Assessment

It is important that appropriate assessment modes are used to ascertain students' musical learning and understanding and to meet the assessment objectives. The proposed assessment modes for the syllabus are presented below, which can serve both formative and summative purposes:

Assessment Modes	Assessment Objectives
Students will be assessed on their ability to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Craft appropriate research questions	AO1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate understanding of a range of musical issues and perspectives	AO1, AO2 and AO3

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply appropriate analytical, inquiry and/or investigative methods to analyse and evaluate a range of sources	AO1, AO2 and AO3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate well-substantiated musical response that is informed by inquiry, and which displays clarity, independence of thought, and skilfulness in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Writing;○ Creating;○ Performing	AO1, AO2 and AO3

National Examination

Details on the national examination and H2 Examination Syllabus are found in the *Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board* website:

<https://www.seab.gov.sg/home/examinations/gce-a-level>