

AO4 Word Bank

A non-exhaustive list of words that can engagingly describe music – how many can you get into your essays over the A-level course?

abates	alienates (the listener)	awash
ablaze	aligns	beautiful
abolish	allaying	blaring
abrasive	alleviates	blazing
abridge	allows	bleak
abrupt	alludes	blissful
absorb	alters	blooming
absurd	although	blossoming
abuzz	always	bodes
accelerating	amalgamates	bombastic
accenting	amasses	booming
accentuate	amazingly	brash
acclamation	ambiance	brassy
accompanies	ambiguous	brief
accompaniment	ambitious	bright
accomplished	ambushes (the listener?)	brilliant
accost (the listener?)	amplifies	brooding
accrue	analytically	brutal
accumulate	anarchic	bubbling
achieving	anchors	bubbly
aching	angers	builds
acknowledging	angst	buildup
acoustic	anguish	buoyant
acquires	angular	busy
acrobatic	animates	cacophonous
acting	animating	calamitous
activates	announces	calm
acute	answers	capricious
adamantly	anticipates	captivating
adapting	anti-climax	captures
added	antithesis	cascades
additional	apocalyptic (!)	catchy
adheres	apotheosis	cautious
adjusts	apparent	celebratory
admirably	appealing	cements
adopts	appearance	centres
adorns	applicable	changes
adrift	approaches	chaotic
adventurous	arguably	characterful
adversely	arises	charged
advocates	arrests	charming
affectation	arrives	chattering
affects	artfully	cheeky
affirming	articulates	cheerful
affirmatively	assembles	chirping (woodwinds?)
affirms	asserts	churning
against	associates	clamorous
aggravates	atmospheric	clashing
aggressive	attacks	clever
agile	attempts	climax
agitated	atypical	coarse
agonising	audacious	cold
aided (by)	audible	colourful
airy	augments	combative
akin	aurally	comforting
alarming	averts	comic

commanding
compelling
concluding
confidant
confusing
conjuring
contemplative
contrasting
contributing
conversational
conveying
convincingly
convivial
convoluted
cooling
crashing
crazy
creatively
creepily
crisply
crunchy
crystalline
crystallises
culminating
cumulative
curtailing
cyclical
dainty
dancing
dangerous
daring
dark
darting
daunting
dazzling
deafening
decadent
decaying
deceptive
declamatory
decorative
decreasing
deep
definite
deflating
dejected
delayed
deliberate
delightful
delirious
demanding
demonic
depicting
depleting
depressing
depth
descends
describes
desolate
desperate
despondent
destabilised
destructive

detached
detailed
deteriorates
determined
devastating
devout
dexterous
diabolical
diametrically
difficult
diffuses
dignified
dilutes
diminishes
directionless
disconnected
discovery
discrete
discursive
discussion
disfigured
disguised
disorderly
dispassionate
dispirited
disruptive
distant
distinctive
distorted
dominating
dramatic
dreamy
driving
eager
echoing
edgy
elaborate
elan
electric
electrifying
elegant
embellished
emotive
empty
enchanted
enigmatic
epic
episodic
erratic
erupting
escalating
euphoric
evocative
exhilarating
explosive
expressive
exquisite
extensive
extraordinary
extravagant
extreme
ferocious
fierce

filigree
fizzy
flashy
fleeting
flickers
floating
florid
flowery
fluctuating
fluttering
flying
forceful
foreboding
foreshadowing
fragmentary
frantic
free
frenzied
frightening
funky
galloping
ghostly
glassy
gleaming
glittering
gloomy
glorious
glossy
gracious
grand
grim
gritty
gruesome
happy
harking
harnessing
harrowing
havoc
hazy
heartbreaking
heated
heavenly
heroic
hesitant
hobbling
horrific
hovering
howling
hubbub
humorous
hurried
hurrying
hushed
hypnotic
icy
idiomatic
idyllic
illusion
illustrates
imaginatively
imitates
immense
impatient

impish
implodes
imposing
impressive
impressionistic
impulsive
incorporates
incredible
indicates
indistinguishable
individual
induces (a feeling of?)
indulgent
industrial
infantile
infectious (energy?)
infiltrates
infinite
influences
informs
infuses
ingenious(ly)
inimitable
initially
innovative
inquisitive
insinuates
insistent
inspiring
instigates
instinctive
instrumental (in doing/causing something)
integrates
intends
intense
interacts
interchanges
interjects
interrogates
interrupts
interspersed
intricate
introduces
invariably
inventive
involves
invokes
jagged
jarring
jaunty
jazzy
jittery
jokey
jostling
joyful
jubilant
juddering
jumbled
jumpy
juxtaposed
kaleidoscopic
laborious
lacklustre

lamenting
languid
languishing
lavish
layered
lazy
liberated
light
lighthearted
limping
linear
lingering
lively
lofty
looming
loose
lovely
lucid
luminous
lumpy
lurching
lush
luxurious
lyrical
macabre
magical
majestic
marching
marked
marvellous
masterful
materialised
mayhem
meandering
measured
mechanical
meditative
melancholic
melodic
menacing
metamorphoses
metronomic
mimicking
mischievous
miserable
mistily
momentarily
moody
mosaic
motoring
mournful
murky
muttering
mysterious
narrative
nationalistic
naturally
neatly
nebulous
nervously
nimble
nobly
nocturnal

nonchalant
nostalgic
novel
obscures
occasionally
occurs
oeuvre (work)
ominous
omits
ostentatious
outbursts
outpouring (of emotion)
overtly
overwhelming
painstaking
painting (in sound?)
parallels (with)
partially
particularly
passive
pastoral
patriotic
paving (the way for...)
peaceful
perfectly
periodically
perky
permeates
perpetual
perpetuates
pertains (to)
pertinent
pervades
pivotal
placid
plain
plodding
plummeting
poetic
poignant
pointed
polished
pompous
ponderous
portrays
possesses
possibly
potentially
pounding
powerful
prayerful
precarious
precise
precludes
predictable
predominantly
preferably
prelude (to)
prepares (the listener?) (for?)
presents
preserves
prestigious
presumably

pretends
prevails
prevents
preview
prickly
primal
principally
prioritises
probably
problematic
proceeds
process
processional
produces
progresses
prohibits
projects
prolongs
promises
propagates
propels
protests
proves
pulls (the listener?)
pulsating
pure
purposeful
pushes
puzzling
quickly
quietens
quintessential
quirky
racing
radiant
radical
raging
rapid
refined
reminiscent
repeatedly
repetitive
revolutionary
rhapsodic
rhythmic
rich
rigid
romantic
rough
rousing
rowdy
rushing
rustic
sad
savage
scampering
scarce
scary
scintillating
scurrying
sensational
sensitive
sentimental

serene
serious
shimmering
shining
significant
silent
silky
simmering
simple
simplistic
sizzling
skilful
skittish
sleepy
slick
sluggish
smooth
soaring
sombre
soothing
soporific
sparkly
spellbinding
sprightly
stabbing
stark
static
still
stormy
strident
strong
subdued
subverting (expectations?)
suffering
suffocating
sullen
suspicious
sustained
sweeping
sweet
swirling
symbolising
symphonic
tantalising
tense
terrific
terrifying
theatrical
threatening
timeless
timid
tormented
traditional
tragic
tranquil
transcendent
transformed
translucent
trembling
triumphant
tumbling
twisting
uncertain

uncharacteristic
uncomfortable
undulating
unearthly
uneven
unfolding
unfurls
unified
uniform
unites
universal
unravelling
unsurprising
unusual
unveiling
unwavering
upheaval
ushering (in)
usually
uttering
vague
variations
veiled
velvety
vibrant
victorious
vigorous
violent
vivacious
volatile
warm
weak
weary
weaving
whimsical
whirling
whispering
wistful
witty
wonderful
yearning
youthful
zesty
zigzagging
zooming