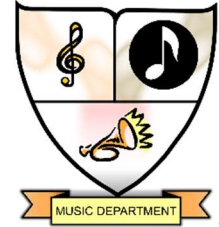




A Level Music

Summer Work 2020



The long summer holiday is a chance for you to relax and unwind after two years of preparing for, and taking, your GCSE exams. However, it is also a time to look ahead and think about how best to equip yourself for the OCR Music A Level course. Little and often is far more academically valuable than one massive cramming session the day before you start year 12. See the list of suggested videos in point 6 if you are new to RMGS and don't have access to Moodle.

The key areas you will need to address are:

1. **Music theory.** The A Level course uses full musical scores, and the more rapidly you can look at the information and read and understand it, the greater depth of detail and understanding you will be able to show.

You need to have an understanding of at least ABRSM Grade 5 standard.

There are lots of websites that will help you with this, as well as books and past papers.

- [My Music Theory](#) - a web site with exercises based on the ABRSM theory grades. You can print exercises off as well as do them on line. A great place to start is [What Music Theory Grade Am I](#) to work out your starting point and areas of strength and weakness.
 - [Music Theory Net](#) - a very useful site, which starts at the very basics of music theory. It has exercises that you can tailor to your needs, from the most basic of concepts to more advanced ones. It also has interval and chord recognition, very useful if you are preparing for grade exams as well as for the listening paper. It is not the flashiest looking site, but the content is excellent.
 - [Chorale Guide](#) - an excellent series of lessons and exercises taking you through all the crucial stages of harmonising Bach chorales, and the basics of standard musical harmony and part writing.
2. **Music history – Classical.** The course will range from Baroque music up to the most contemporary 20th century composers. You should aim to have a working knowledge of all the musical periods (early Baroque, late Baroque, Classical, early Romantic, late Romantic, 20th Century), covering:
 - Key dates, composers, musical events, and world events
 - Fingerprints of the musical style – instrumentation, tonality and harmony, form and structure, ornamentation, compositional devices, texture, context (*why* was the music composed? *What* influenced the composer? What was the music *in response* to? What is it *used* for?), as well as any other relevant key stylistic features.
 - For each period, pick at least one work which you feel is a good representative of the typical features. Use the [Petrucci Music Library](#) to find a score, and listen to the work whilst following the score. Try and label the score as you're going, pointing out features which make the piece representative of the period. Be prepared to share this work with the class when you start in September.

- For the Classical period, make Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven your key starting points, as these three composers will form the backbone of your study for Unit 1.
 - For the Romantic period, focus on Rachmaninov, Liszt, Richard Strauss, and Tchaikovsky. Look particularly at programme music, nationalism (the musical genre) and solo piano music.
 - For the 20th Century, look at Mahler, Schoenberg, Debussy, Stravinsky, Bartok, Vaughan Williams, Lutoslawski, Reich, and Weir. Each composer tends to link to a particular style or compositional technique. Some to look at are: Impressionism, Nationalism, Avant-garde, Serialism, and Minimalism.
3. **Music History- Popular song: Blues, Jazz, Swing and Big Band.** The course will cover a wide range of early popular music styles. You should research and become familiar with the four genres of popular song listed above, including:
- Key dates and events of the time including technological developments in music.
 - Context. Especially race relations in the USA during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
 - Fingerprints of the musical style; i.e. what do they sound like? Listen to a wide range of songs from different relevant years; including early blues artists such as Blind Lemon Jefferson and Robert Johnson, early Jazz artists such as Scott Joplin and Louis Armstrong, Jazz “Queens” such as Bessie Smith and Ella Fitzgerald, and Swing and Big Band artists and crooners such as Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby
4. **Listening.** You will need to be familiar with the elements of music and what they sound like. Use your GCSE knowledge as a starting point and work on any areas of weakness. We use MAD T SHIRT – Melody, Articulation, Dynamics, Texture, Structure, Harmony & Tonality, Instrumentation, Rhythm, and Tempo.
- Focus on Sound** (logon details on Moodle) is the best place to start, as it explains terms and allows you to listen to examples and test yourself. If you are joining RMGS in September, you will receive your logon details then.
5. **Performing.** You will need to ensure you keep your instrumental practice going over the summer. When you present your A Level Recital in Year 13, you need to be a MINIMUM of Grade 6 standard. You don’t need to have taken the exam, just be playing material which is that standard, and play in a way which shows you have the technical control and mastery of the instrument to cope with it. Ideally, you should be closer to Grade 7 or 8 to access the higher marks.
- It is vital that you continue to receive expert instrumental teaching on a weekly basis during the whole of your A Level course, and that you support and attend RMGS Music Department ensembles and concerts to hone and build your skills and confidence. Over the summer, do your best to practice your instrument for at least half an hour a day. When planning your repertoire, begin by looking at the published lists of grade pieces for your instrument. Some of the main boards for instrumental and vocal exams are:
- [ABRSM](#)
 - [Trinity Guildhall](#)
 - [Rock School](#)
 - [London College of Music](#) (especially for Musical Theatre)

- [Registry of Guitar Tutors](#)

Please be aware that Victoria College grade standards are much lower than the standards set by the main boards listed above, so if this is your exam board please talk to Miss Smallwood in September.

Talk to your instrumental teacher in September so they are aware of these requirements.

6. [The Year 12 Music Moodle page](#)

<https://moodle.rainhammark.com/course/view.php?id=164#section-2> has lots more useful links to websites, and if you find any which aren't listed but will be of use, please e-mail them to Miss Smallwood and they can be added on to assist other students.

If you are joining RMGS in September, linked below are the most useful resources for you as you prepare for A Level.

- LSO Discovery A Level Overview of Musical Styles: [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) [Part 3](#)
- BBC [Five Chords that Changed Classical Music Forever](#)
- Keeping Score - Documentaries featuring the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra: [YouTube playlist](#)

Have a great summer – get that balance between relaxing and enjoying yourself, and keeping your academic and practical studies ticking over so you are ready and raring to go at the start of Year 12.

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