

Transitioning to Music A Level (AQA)

Some suggestions:

- 1) **Play your instrument** – Performing is a huge part of A-Level Music (35% of the course) so why not challenge yourself with a goal for daily practice on your instrument(s)? 30 mins, 1 hour, 2 hours! Transitioning to A Level Music is about raising your performance levels and consistency of performance on your instrument/voice so set yourself some performance targets for the next few months. Record yourself performing and be ultra-critical. It is not about playing the hardest piece, it is about maintaining a high level of performance.
- 2) **Listening** – Start creating some playlists on Spotify, YouTube or Apple Music based not just on the set works but listening around those areas to similar types of music. Get familiar with the characteristics and sounds of this music. A list of set pieces and areas can be found at the bottom of this document.
- 3) **Theory** – Being confident with theory will really help at the start of the course so, if you have not yet reached Grade 5 Theory level, use this time to work towards that level using workbooks and past papers for Grade 3 and Grade 4 Theory. For those who have done Grade 5 Theory use the time to brush up on some of your weaker areas or challenge yourself by looking at some of the harmony and general exercise work at Grade 6 theory level.
- 4) **Extended Writing** – With an increase in written work at A Level Music, how about challenging yourself to write an extended prose. You could choose a topic of your choice or something a bit more open:
 - Do we really need music in film?
 - Why are all the best composers dead?
 - Popular music isn't really music. Discuss.
 - The silence is as important as the notes. Discuss.
- 5) **Watching** – There is so much free stuff available currently online, either through websites or YouTube so maybe spend an evening watching something with which you are less familiar.
- 6) **Reading** – How about ordering yourself a book and do some wider reading around the subject? Two possible suggestions are The Story of Music by Howard Goodall and How Music Works by John Powell. Both are well written, informative and easy to read.

7) Composing – Use your time to develop your compositional skills. Maybe set yourself a task slightly outside of your comfort zone and work on this for a couple of weeks.

Set Works and Areas

Baroque Concertos

Purcell Sonata for trumpet and strings in D major Z.850 (complete)
Vivaldi Flute concerto in D Il Gardellino op.10 no.3 RV428 (complete)
Bach Violin concerto in A minor BWV1041 (complete)

Mozart Opera

Mozart Le Nozze di Figaro k.492: Act 1, focusing on:

- Overture
- No.1 Duetto (Figaro and Susanna, including following recitative)
- No.3 Cavatina (Figaro, including the previous recitative)
- No.4 Aria (Bartolo)
- No.5 Duetto (Susanna and Marcellina)
- No.6 Aria (Cherubino)
- No.7 Terzetto (Susanna, Basilio, Count)
- No.9 Aria (Figaro).

Romantic Piano Music

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| Chopin | • Ballade no.2 in F major op. 38 |
| | • Nocturne in E minor op.72 no.1 |
| Brahms | • Intermezzo in A major op.118.no. 2 |
| | • Ballade in G minor op.118 no. 3 |
| Grieg | • Norwegian march op.54 no. 2 |
| | • Notturmo op.54 no. 4 |

Film Music

In his area there are no set works but set composers to focus on so draw up a playlist of music by the following composers: Bernard Herrmann, Hans Zimmer and Thomas Newman. Maybe watch some iconic films with music by them:

Psycho
Vertigo
Inception
Gladiator
Shawshank Redemption

Or if you want to relive your earlier childhood, Finding Nemo!

Jazz Music

There are no set works in this area, so draw up a playlist of Louis Armstrong (particularly the Hot Fives), Charlie Parker and Pat Metheny. Please also do some research into the basics of jazz harmony; there are a wealth of beginner-friendly and accessible videos on this topic available on YouTube, particularly from musicians such as Adam Neely and Rick Beato.

I have further resources linked to the set pieces and other areas which I can send in advance so do contact me on dbullen@lpsb.org.uk.

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