

Year 11 Transition Work

[Download the transition work checklist](#)

Basic Theory

When we start the A level course we begin with a module called Starting Points in which we review basic theory through some simple composition tasks. We will go over keys, triads, dissonance etc. but I do presume some basic knowledge. On the following (external) page you should be familiar with the topics in the following sections:

Musictheory.net

- *The Basics* – all sections
- *Rhythm and Metre* – all sections
- *Scales and Key Signatures* – all sections
- *Intervals* – all sections
- The first two lessons from *Chords*, *Diatonic Chords* and the first from *Chord Progressions* would be a bonus

Music History

Read through and listen to the material on the [Short History of Music](#) pages and then complete the worksheet below. You can either print it off and complete by hand or fill it in as a word documents and then print them of

[Short History of Music Worksheet \(Google Doc\)](#) Please make a copy and share it with ldavies137@coombe.org.uk once completed.

Performance

Make sure you don't neglect your playing during this break. If you are having online lessons with your teacher, then that will obviously keep you going. If you are not, I suggest you do at least some of the tasks below to keep yourself in practice.

- polish up a piece you are already working on and video it. You could then share it with your friends and family. You can even send it to me at ldavies137@coombe.org.uk if you want. You might find a recorded accompaniment on Youtube for pieces that are very regularly played for grades etc.

- resurrect an older piece that you really enjoyed. You will be able to play it better now you are a bit more advanced. Listen to some performances of the piece on Apple Music/Spotify/Youtube. What do you like about these performances? Is there anything you can incorporate. Again, you could video your performance.
- look at the graded lists for the level at which you are currently playing. Listen to the pieces and choose one to learn from scratch. You can use recorded performances to help you learn the piece and decide how to play it.

Composition

Brief: Composing idiomatically for instruments

Compose a short piece of music (c.2 minutes) which explores the techniques and ranges of your instrument.

Your piece can be in any style and can be for solo or with accompaniment. It would be useful to compile a list of pieces you have listened to for inspiration. These might include some key works for your instrument or pieces in the style/genre you wish to compose. Keep this 'listening log' and submit it with your composition. There are many books written about each instrument and the available techniques. Make sure you research and read around the subject so you include more extended playing techniques.

Points to consider

What is the overall structure of your piece going to be?

Is there a need for a melody or motifs?

Do you need to map out a chord structure or is there no tonal centre?

Perform your piece as you compose, make sure it is playable!

If you add an accompaniment is it going to be piano or guitar?

Be prepared to perform your composition in September. You will need to notate or produce some sort of score as well using either Western notation or tablature.

Reading staff notation

Reading staff notation is an important skill to develop in A Level Music. Read the following link on the basics.

<https://www.earmaster.com/music-theory-online/ch01/chapter-1-1.html>

Now read the following link on creating chord charts.

<https://www.cmburridge.com/teaching/bach-chorales/lesson-1-chords-and-keys/>

Copy out the chord chart in the key of C major.

Below is an extract from *If Ye Love Me* by Thomas Tallis.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'If Ye Love Me' by Thomas Tallis. It consists of four staves of music, each with a different clef (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass). The time signature is 4/2. The lyrics are written below the staves: 'If ye love me, keep my com-mand-ments.' The music is written in a simple, homophonic style, with each staff having a single melodic line. The notes are mostly half notes and whole notes, with some rests. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), indicating the key of F major or D minor.

Work out the chord on each syllable by writing out the notes and then seeing on the chord chart to which chord they translate: e.g. 'If' has the notes C, E, G, C (bottom to top) which makes the chord C major, or Roman numeral I.

What cadence is used at the end of the excerpt? _____

How would you describe the texture of the excerpt? _____

Here is a passage taken from later in *If Ye Love Me*.

15.

that he may 'bide with you for - ev - er

he may 'bide with you for - ev - er, with you for - ev - er,

'bide with you for - ev - er, that he may 'bide with you for - ev - er,

may 'bide with you for - ev - er, may 'bide with you for - ev - er,

The image shows a musical score for a four-part setting of 'If Ye Love Me'. It consists of four staves. The top staff is a vocal line (soprano) with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The second staff is a vocal line (alto) with a treble clef. The third staff is a vocal line (tenor) with a bass clef. The fourth staff is a vocal line (bass) with a bass clef. The lyrics are written below the staves. The music is in a homophonic texture, with all parts moving in parallel motion. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is common time (C). The score is numbered 15 at the beginning of the first staff.

Which accidental has been added and in which part? _____

The inclusion of this accidental indicates that the composer has modulated to, or at least hinted at, which key? _____

Extension Tasks

If you are looking for other things to keep you busy, pick a selection from the following tasks.

Reading

- Sion, Colborne, Gardiner, Pankhurst et al (2017) *Eduqas AS and A Level Music Study Guide*, London: Rhinegold (Amazon link) [covers the background information needed for the course – useful but not essential to read before the A level starts]
- Winterson and Harris (2014) *Music Theory: The Essential Guide* London: Faber (Amazon link) [if your basic theory is a bit ropey then this is good for making sure you know up to Grade 5 theory stuff]

Stuff to watch on Youtube

- Some really simple explanations of basic music theory building blocks at [12tone](#), Starts with some ludicrously basic stuff but moves on to go over basics that you might be rusty on.
- Good basic introduction to the symphony by [Howard Goodall from the BBC](#)
- A much [longer video on the symphony](#) by Howard Goodall (this is the first of a series)
- An [introduction to Debussy](#), again from Howard Goodall at the BBC
- Anything on the LSO Youtube Playlist
- During the COVID 19 lockdown you can access archived [Berlin Philharmonic concerts](#) – amazing!
- Lloyd Webber is streaming his musicals free on Friday nights on [theshowsmustgoon](#)
- And here is a massive list of performing arts stuff you can access from home during lockdown. Most of it free or very cheap.