



The Music Department team are really looking forward to seeing all of you in September as part of our next A Level Music group. As you now have quite a bit more time to yourselves, it's even more important that you maintain and develop your musicianship skills throughout the summer term. We have put together some tasks for you to complete before you start your A level music course. There are some history, listening, composition and performance tasks for you to have a go at. They will really help you hit the ground running in September with the Edexcel course.

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## The Course

At Formby High School, we follow the Edexcel A Level Music course. To be well prepared for September, it's useful for you to take a look at how the course is broken down. You can find the full details of the course including the full specification.

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/music-2016.html>

## Performance

You must keep up with regular practice on your chosen specialist Instrument or voice. You all know that being a musician requires stamina and dedication, with frequent opportunities to flex your performing muscles. To that end, we ask that you keep working on new repertoire and extending your technical skills. We realise that you may not be receiving lessons at the moment but use online resources and remote learning where possible. Send audio recordings to your teachers for feedback and play to members of your household. When we start the school year, hopefully in September, you will all need to record a baseline solo recording and also collaborate on a group performance. Please make sure that your solo is ready to go!

You can also get involved with one of our online projects such as our virtual choir, virtual orchestra and 'Lockdown Live Lounges' Wednesday night gigs. Just email [virtualchoir2020@formbyhighschool.com](mailto:virtualchoir2020@formbyhighschool.com) for details of all these projects.

Tips for a more mindful approach to practice;

1. Warm up – it is important, like exercise, that you warm up before you play. You can do this by playing through scales, arpeggios and short rhythmic activities.
2. Keep a practice log and set yourself goals to achieve each week.
3. Select small chunks to practice. Four bar/eight bar phrases. Sometimes smaller!
4. Repetition is key. Slow down the tricky bits until you're confident it's right.
5. Record yourself and listen. This is a great tool to self-evaluate.

## Composition

Once the course starts, we will work on a number of creative projects to develop compositional skills in a range of styles and genres. These will lead to two pieces of original composition/arrangement.

We would like to encourage you to keep up with creative composition at home. Work with the resources you have available - piano/keyboard, guitar, voice, specialist Instruments and explore melodic writing, word setting and harmony.

**Use any other following as a stimulus or just create one of your own:**

- A song themed around the lockdown period
- A song to support a charity close to your heart
- A song for your favourite musical theatre character (which they don't get to sing in their current musical story!)
- A solo, acoustic song for an 'open mic night' – for voice with piano, keyboard or guitar
- A piece of solo instrumental music – which you can play yourself
- A dance / techno track
- A rock anthem

If you have access to a computer and the Internet, Avid has a number of Sibelius options available for use remotely. Sibelius First is a FREE, entry level version for up to 4 parts. There is also an annual subscription version for around £100 which will, allow you to access your files from school through the course. [https://shop.avid.com/ccrz\\_ProductDetails?viewState=DetailView&cartID=&sku=SBDYNA2000&](https://shop.avid.com/ccrz_ProductDetails?viewState=DetailView&cartID=&sku=SBDYNA2000&)

You can access 30 free days of Cubase software if you follow this link <https://new.steinberg.net/cubase/trial/>

Miss Dilworth has created some technology projects on <https://edu.bandlab.com> which you will also find really worthwhile. Get in touch via email for details.

## Theory, Listening and Music History

When we start the A level course, we will have regular music theory lessons to develop valuable knowledge and skills for use in analysis and composition tasks. We will go over keys, triads, dissonance etc. and this website has some really useful 'lessons' and exercises.

<https://www.musictheory.net/lessons>

Have a go at these topics to give you a head start.

- The Basics
- Rhythm and Metre
- Scales and Key Signatures
- Intervals
- Chords, Diatonic Chords – developing a good awareness of chords and harmony is essential for A Level – playing them on keyboard or guitar, as well as working them out in notation!
- Chord Progressions

<https://www.teoria.com/en/exercises/>

Teoria has some fantastic theory resources where you can set the difficulty level to suit you. There are tutorials and ear training exercises. In preparing for A Level, ear training and the ability to recognise musical features will be invaluable.

## Musicology

Developing a wide listening repertoire and knowledge of musical styles, is really important to success at A Level Music. Like GCSE, you will be studying music across a wide range of genres. It will open your eyes to how music has such a big part to play in many art forms and historical moments. To get a head start, try and immerse yourself in music you wouldn't normally listen to. Start listening to the radio, podcasts and documentaries. There are so many around!

## TV and Streaming

Howard Goodall's BBC Series 'The Story of Music', 'Big Bangs' and 'How Music Works' provide fantastic general backgrounds to music of all genres.

[Howard Goodall 'The Story of Music'](#) – this link takes you to Episode 1

[Howard Goodall 'Big Bangs'](#)

[Howard Goodall 'How Music Works'](#)

For **Netflix** subscribers, check out '20 Feet from Stardom', 'Quincy' and 'Gaga: Five Foot Two' documentary films for insights into the people behind the microphones and spotlights!

For those on **Amazon Prime Video**, there are some great music documentaries including 'Coldplay – A Head full of Dreams', 'Whitney', 'Nile Rodgers – the Hitmaker', 'How the Beatles Changed the World' and Dave Grohl's 'Sound City' story of one of the world's greatest recording studios.

## Podcasts

<https://www.classicfm.com/radio/podcasts/>

## Websites

<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/>

## Books



All the above are published by Rhinegold

## Musical Enrichment

<https://www.theculturediary.com/stories/watch-theatre-music-and-dance-shows-home-during-covid-19-pandemic-ongoing-list>

<https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/live-streamed-classical-music-concerts-coronavirus/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdmPjhKMxNNeCr1FjuMvag>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUDq1XzCY0NIOYVJvEMQjqw>

So many theatres and shows that have been temporarily put on hold due to Covid-19, are now available online. Check out the links above to see some incredible performances direct to your homes. You will find many artists currently doing regular 'Instagram or Facebook live' sessions that you can watch.