

Transition to Music A-Level

The following document has been put together to help you undertake some preparation for your further studies of music next academic year. It has been divided into two sections; "General Resources" which will be useful for any path of music and "Bay House A Level Music" which includes more specific information in preparation for A level study at Bay House Sixth Form.

General Resources

Below is a list of some useful online resources to consolidate your GCSE learning and better prepare you for your study next year. If you have any queries or need help with a specific problem please do contact Mr Langridge for help: selanridge@bayhouse.gfmat.org

GCSE BITESIZE

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/zfwv7nb>

Whilst aimed at the GCSE syllabus, this is an excellent place to start checking your understanding in preparation for your next level of studies.

COMPOSITION

<https://learningmusic.ableton.com/>

This is a free online resource which takes you through the basics and then onto the more complex aspects of composing.

THEORY ROCKS

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP4bC1sD1QcMVVxMSEL7qU>

This is a series of 6 Youtube videos that explain different aspects of music theory in a really engaging and easy-to-understand, visual way. The videos cover time signatures, note & rest values, scales, reading treble & bass clef. Look in the video descriptions for links to online quizzes created for each video.

MUSIC THEORY

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

This website consists of over 20 different interactive exercises covering essential music theory knowledge, including ear training exercises for students to develop your recognition of intervals and cadences.

PIXL SPINE

The PiXL Spine documents provided give further explanation on a range of musical elements. The extension booklets contain activities to help embed your understanding.

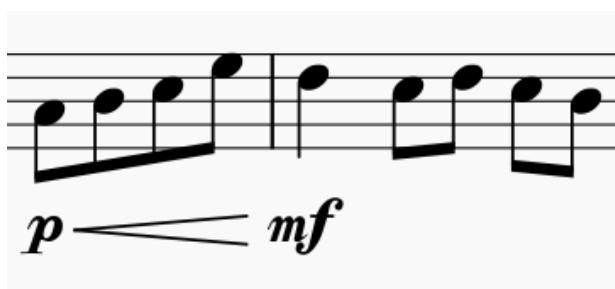
PiXL Spine – Music – Musical Elements

Dynamics

Dynamics is a term used to describe the volume of music. Some pieces of music have very little dynamic change, whereas others have lots of dynamic contrast. Being able to comment on the use of dynamics is an essential part of talking and writing about music.

In music, we refer to the different dynamic levels by using Italian terms and symbols. For example, **forte** means loud and is abbreviated to an **f** symbol on the sheet music.

As well as telling the performer how loud to play, crescendos and diminuendos can be used to direct performers to gradually change the dynamics. This can either be done by using an abbreviation e.g. 'cresc.' (short for crescendo), 'dim.' (short for diminuendo) or by using symbols such as the one under the notation below, which means crescendo.



Activity:

1. Research the following dynamic markings in the table below and fill in the table with the names of the different dynamics, their meaning and their symbol.

Dynamic marking	Symbol	Meaning
Forte	f	Loud
Piano		
Crescendo		
Diminuendo		
Mezzo forte		
Mezzo piano		
Fortissimo		
Pianissimo		

2. Listen to the following excerpt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrIYT-MrVal>
Suggest an appropriate dynamic marking at the following timings:
 - a. 0:10
 - b. 1:04
 - c. 1:46
3. How does the use of dynamics through the piece affect the audience?

Rhythm

Rhythm is the combination of long and short notes to create an interesting musical pattern.

To discuss rhythm, it helps to know the names, symbols and meanings of the different note and rest values. (See the booklet on notation for the names and symbols of these.)

An **onbeat** rhythm is played on the strong beats of the bar. In a bar of 4/4, the first beat of the bar is a 'strong' beat, as is the third beat.

An **offbeat** rhythm is played on the weak beats of the bar or off the beat. Listen to the clips below to hear some examples of music with an emphasis on the offbeat.

- **Reggae** music makes use of offbeats. The chords in 'Three Little Birds' are played on the offbeat. This can clearly be heard from 0:15 in the guitar and piano:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LanCLS_hlo4
- **Ska** music also makes use of offbeats, although usually has a much faster tempo than reggae. Listen to this Madness track from 0:27 to hear how the chords are played on the offbeats throughout the track: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9N8piRFVcU>

Syncopation is a type of musical rhythm where the emphasis is not on the beat.

Syncopation is a broader term than offbeat that can be used to describe a range of rhythms with emphasis on weak beats. Some syncopated rhythms are commonly used and are associated with different countries. Research the different rhythmic styles listed below to find out where they originate and what they sound like.

- Clave
- Samba
- Salsa
- Merengue
- Bossa nova
- Son

Rhythm is linked to **tempo**, which refers to the speed of a piece of music. Italian terms are often used to instruct the performer how fast to play. Research the definitions of the following terms and put them in order, from fastest to slowest:

- Allegro
- Largo
- Moderato
- Adagio
- Vivace
- Lento
- Presto

Texture

Texture refers to how many layers of music there are in a piece. A range of different terms are used, depending on what each part is doing. Many of these terms end with the term 'phonic' which derives from the Greek word '*phone*' which means sound. Below are some examples of texture:

- Music that has a single melody line with no accompaniment is **monophonic**.
- Music that is based on chords where all parts move at the same time is **homophonic**.
- Music that has at least two independent parts playing alternating musical phrases is **antiphonic**. It is often easier to think of this as 'call and response'.
- Music that has multiple melody lines playing at the same time is **polyphonic**.

Listen to the following excerpts and state which texture they would fall under:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLSRVE3t17E>

Texture: _____

2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddbxFi3-UO4&t=53s>

Texture: _____

3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kK5AohCMXOU>

Texture: _____

4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpC2joYt1EI>

Texture: _____

Answers
1. Homophonic
2. Polyphonic
3. Monophonic
4. Antiphonic

These pieces of music were all from the Western classical tradition. Listen to pieces from other genres of music and try to work out what texture they use.

Structure

Structure describes how composers order their musical ideas. In pop music, the sections of a song will have names like verse, chorus and bridge. In classical music, the different sections are labelled with the letters A, B, and C.

Different structures have specific combinations of contrasting sections.

Binary form is a musical structure where there are two sections creating an AB structure.

Ternary form is a musical structure which is similar to binary form, although the original section returns again, creating an ABA structure.

Arch form is a symmetrical structure where, after a central section, sections return in reverse order (e.g. ABCBA).

Rondo form is a musical structure where a main A section returns between contrasting themes (e.g. ABACA, etc.).

Listen to the excerpt below from 0:19 and use letters to represent each section. Work out what the overall structure of the piece is: <https://youtu.be/T5ALPzSOQfQ?t=19>

There are many different types of structure. Research the following terms and find examples of pieces of music that use them:

- Ritornello form
- Ground bass
- Sonata form
- Theme and variations

Melody

A more common term for **melody** is **tune**. There are several ways in which melodies can be constructed and developed to create musical interest.



Using the definition of the key words on the PiXL Spine Musical Elements mat to help you, identify a moment in the melody above where there is:

- Conjunct movement
- Ascending
- Descending
- Sequence

Instrumentation

Instrumentation describes the instruments, types of ensemble and use of music technology that can be heard in a piece. This may also be referred to as sonority, forces or orchestration.

Research the different ensembles and list the instruments that are commonly found in them:

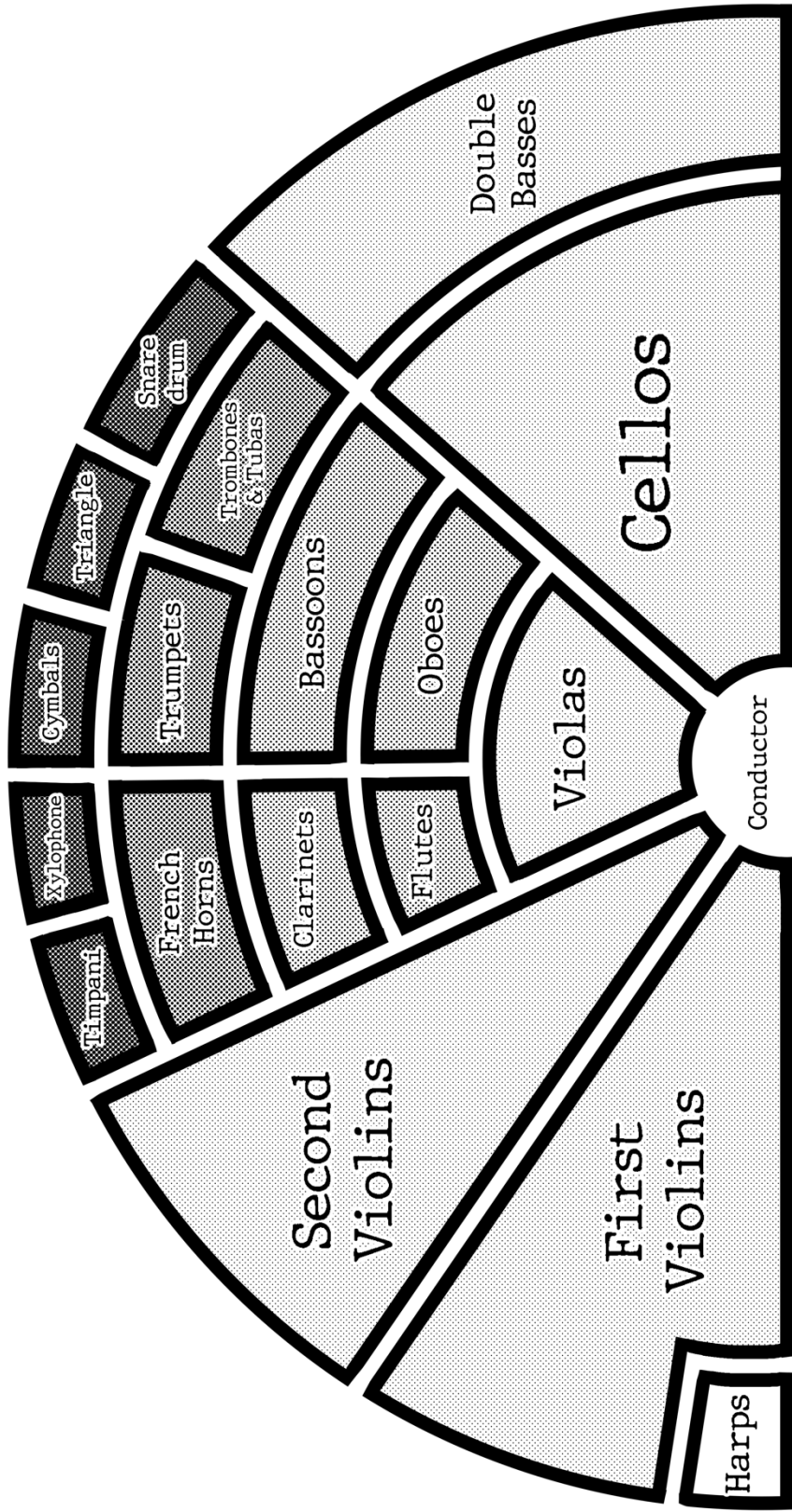
Ensemble	Instruments they contain
String quartet	
Brass quintet	
Big band	
Orchestra	

Activity:

Listen to the different sections of the orchestra by going to this website:

<https://www.animatedscience.co.uk/animations/orchestra/orchestra.htm>

Click on the different sections of the orchestra to see information on them and to hear how individual instruments sound. Annotate the template on the next page with your thoughts on what each instrument sounds like and useful information about them.



Tonality

The mood and atmosphere of a piece of music are set by its key centre or tonality. Music that is tonal is either major or minor.

The **major** scale is often used by composers to create a pleasant and happy feel to the music. The **minor** scale is often used by composers to give the music an angry or sad feel. Associating major and minor with these emotions is a good place to start, but do remember that some minor music can sound upbeat and some major music can sound sad.

It is important to know the difference between the two scales. If you flatten the 3rd and 6th degrees of a major scale, you create a harmonic minor scale.

Listen to the following excerpts and state whether they are major or minor:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpuPP1YUYHs>

2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqclVntQIzc>

3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usfiAsWR4qU>

4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrcOckYQX3c&t=125s>

5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oy2zDJPIgwc>

Answers
1. Minor
2. Major
3. Major
4. Minor
5. Major

Atonal music has no sense of key. Listen to the following excerpt that is an example of atonal music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_0W5MIQrT0

Harmony

Harmony relates to the combination of two or more pitches at the same time, creating a **chord**. There are seven different notes in each key and a chord can be constructed on each note. Roman numerals are used to state which chord is used. Note that the major chords are represented with a capital roman numeral, minor chords with lower case. Constructing a chord on the seventh degree of the scale in a major key creates a diminished chord, which has been represented by using italics.

Look at the table below to see how this is used in the key of C major:

I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	<i>vii</i>
C major	D minor	E minor	F major	G major	A minor	B diminished

For example, the chord progression C, F, Am, G can also be written as I, IV, vi, V.

Compose your own chord progression by using the chords in the table above and write them down as chord symbols and roman numerals.

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PiXL Spine – Music – History of Western Classical Music

Medieval Music: 500-1400 AD

Music of this period was either **sacred** or **secular**.

The Catholic Church had real dominance over music of this period. The main music of this time was the **Mass**. The purpose of the Mass in the Catholic Church was to re-enact Christ's last supper. Acts of worship still take place as Mass in the Catholic Church and 'Holy Communion' or Eucharist in the Protestant Church of England today.

The music of the church was mainly through **chants**. Chants were in the form of a **monophonic** vocal line using **modes** (a kind of scale – modes are still used in Jazz music today). There were many different types of chant during this period in Rome, Ireland, Hispania, Gaul and Milan, each of which was sung by the monks in the monasteries. However, Pope Gregory decided that there needed to be a 'standard' for the chants. They were standardised in Rome and a new chant – the '**Gregorian Chant**' – was the result.

Activity 1:

Listen to the following example of Gregorian Chant: (first 40 seconds)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdroyjKs1Ls>

Now listen to this: www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jXTBAGv9ZQ (first 37 seconds). This piece of music is from an X-Box game (*Halo*), which is inspired by Gregorian Chant. Identify two ways in which the music is similar, and two ways in which the music is different.

Similarities:

Differences:

Motets developed from Chants. This type of composition involved more than one voice and had **polyphonic** textures. The best-known composers were Leonin, Perotin, Adam de St Victor and Pierre de la Croix. However, motets had expanded into **secular themes** by the end of the 13th century. The theme was usually courtly love, where a man adored a noble woman from afar.

In contrast, Goliards – a group of young men who wrote poetry - sung in Latin and dealt with verse about drunkenness and debauchery. Poets would wander from town to town with an early form of lute, to entertain local people. Only a few of these poems survive today.

One of the most famous examples of Renaissance Goliard poetry is ‘Carmina Burana’, which has been composed and orchestrated by Carl Orff (1895-1982). This music is often used today for TV and film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXF5K0ogeg4>

Activity 2:

Research the instruments which were popular in the Medieval period. Describe how the instruments were played and name the family of instruments they belong to: wind, string, brass or percussion.

Instrument	How they were played	Family of instruments

The Renaissance Period: 1400–1600

Any notated music prior to this period was handwritten, using an early form of musical notation:



Most of the music was learnt ‘by ear’, just like we learn to sing ‘happy birthday’ by listening and copying. Music from other parts of the world, such as Africa and Asia, is learnt in this way. We still have traditional music learnt by aural/oral tradition in the UK – for example, nursery rhymes, folk songs and sea shanties.

The printing press was invented around 1440, and this enabled composers to distribute their music more easily.

Both **sacred** and **secular** musical genres continued to flourish and develop during this period.

Madrigals:

These were secular songs that had multiple singers. This made it possible to create a richer texture with four or more independent parts performed simultaneously, creating a **polyphonic** texture. If singers sang different notes, although moved at the same time, this created a **homophonic** texture.

Some madrigals were of a religious nature, such as this by Palestrina:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxLhGIVIQ_0

Some dealt with a more secular theme. For example, ‘The Cricket’ by Josquin des Prez:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OI-bQQRkArA

Opera:

During this period, Opera was developed in Florence. This was a new genre that combined music with literature. The most famous Opera of this time is 'L'Orfeo' by Monteverdi.

Watch the following clip which shows a performance of the overture to the opera:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTQAq9IWDN4

A number of instruments were developed during this period; some are forerunners of the instruments we have today.

Activity 3:

Research instruments of the time period and see if you can make the connection between these instruments and the instruments that are used today in modern orchestras.

Present your answers in the form of a table:

Instrument	How played	Instrument today

The Baroque Period: 1600–1750

This time period had decorative architecture, pictures and wall paintings that covered the interior walls and ceilings of large German and Italian churches. See examples of incredibly detailed art work used in churches in Rome by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.romeartlover.it/Ceiling.html>

The music of the time also became more decorated with the use of **ornamentation**. Below are the most common types of ornamentation that were used:

Trill - a constant rapid alternation between two adjacent notes.

Mordent - a singular rapid alternation between a note and the note directly above or below it.

Turn - a type of ornament where the melody revolves around the written note, using both the note above and below the written note.

Activity 4:

Watch this performance of a piece of music by Scarlatti:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrrCDsxI5eQ

Which ornaments can you hear in the excerpt? _____

The piano was yet to be invented, with the **harpsichord** being the main keyboard instrument used. This had strings inside, much like the piano does today. However, the mechanism inside meant that the string was plucked as opposed to struck with a hammer, which means that it was not possible to play contrasting dynamics. As you can see, there is also a lot of detail on the art work of the harpsichord.



Musical **tonality** was finally established and replaced modes of the Renaissance period. This tonality focused on the **major** and **minor** keys that we use today. **J.S. Bach** is often called the father of harmony. This is mainly due to the fact that he developed the '**well-tempered**' tuning method and used this to compose **48 preludes and fugues**. Here is a link to one of his most well-known preludes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXMVvkQ70I88>

Opera continued to be a favoured source of entertainment. Operas often had themes of a historical or mythical nature and had grand sets and costumes.

Listen to Purcell's **aria** (solo song) 'Hark the Echoing Air' from his Opera 'The Fairy Queen': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRlY4Fr_QpQ

The **soprano** (high female voice) part is a good example of the use of decoration on the melody and the use of **melismas** (singing more than one note to a syllable).

Activity 5:

Watch the following video clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvNQLJ1_HQ0

This is an example of a **ground bass**. This was a common musical form of the time, with a continuous bass line played by the harpsichord or organ and low strings (e.g. the cello). Other instruments then played melodies over the top of this repeating bass pattern.

What are the five instruments in the clip?

Handel was the court composer for George I, who was born in Hanover and became the King of Great Britain and Ireland on 1 August 1714. Handel is known for **The Royal Fireworks Music** and **Water Music**. Handel also wrote **oratorios**. This genre was very similar to opera (a large work for orchestra, chorus and soloists) but had a religious theme and was often performed in either a concert hall or church, although oratorios were not performed with costume and did not have sets and props, as operas did.

Activity 6:

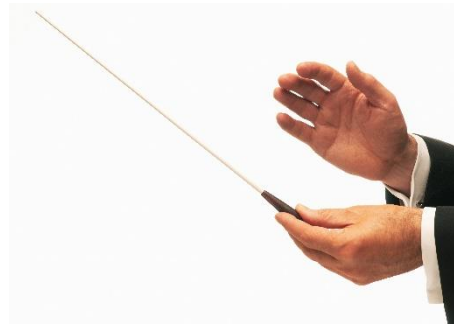
How do you think composing for royalty would affect the music that the composer produced? Listen to the following excerpt:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7vJ2UFbeXA>

State three ways in which this is appropriate for royalty:

The Classical Era: 1750–1820

There were many musical developments during this era, with more instruments being invented. This led to new ensembles and the growth of the orchestra. Due to the increase in size of the orchestra, **conductors** were needed. Conductors wave their arms and a **baton** in order to tell the musicians when to play, to keep them in time and to tell them how loud to play.



The development of the **piano** was also important. It was invented around the year 1700, although did not become a commonly used instrument until the Classical period. It is similar to the harpsichord as the keyboard layout is the same, although the mechanism on the inside is different because the strings are struck with small hammers, as opposed to being plucked. This means that it is possible to play a range of dynamics as well as being able **articulate**

notes in different ways by being able to play **staccato** and **legato**.

The name piano is shortened from **pianoforte** which literally means 'quiet loud', referring to its ability to play dynamics.

Development of Orchestral works

The popular structures in the Baroque Era, such as **Binary** (AB) and **Ternary** (ABA), were developed into larger and more extended structures.

Concerto

This is a piece of music for a **soloist** and an **orchestra**. There is an opportunity for the soloist to be able to demonstrate a **virtuosic** technique. There was usually a **cadenza** where the orchestra stopped, and the soloist could use this moment to 'show off'. Sometimes these musical interludes were **improvised**.

A concerto had three **movements** (individual pieces of music), each one having its own character. Usually, the first movement was quick, the second slow, and the third and final movement, quick.

Activity 7:

Listen to the first movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto no 21.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= Wh5wdvsnbw>

Notice that the soloist does not actually play for the first two minutes and then answer the following questions:

- The orchestra plays first. Why do you think Mozart has written this section for the orchestra first?
- What do we call this section of music?
- Can you name the two wind instruments that play just before the pianist starts playing?

Symphony

The word symphony literally means 'sounding together'. It is a large-scale work for an orchestra. There are usually four movements and each movement has its own character, time signature and key signature.

There were a number of composers who composed symphonies during this period, including Mozart (41 symphonies) and Beethoven (9 symphonies). However, Haydn composed 106 symphonies!

Activity 8:

Watch this video of a performance of Haydn's Symphony no 94.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOLy6JxEDLw>

Name all the instruments that are being played and put them into the correct instrumental family.

Instrument	Family

Activity 9:

Look at the layouts of the orchestra of different time periods on the link below.

<https://www.mydso.com/dso-kids/visit-the-symphony/orchestra-seating-chart>

Make a list of the instruments that are in the classical orchestra that were not present in the baroque orchestra.

The Romantic Era: 1820–1900

The music of the Romantic Era was very **expressive**. Composers used music to express contrasting emotions such as love, happiness and grief. There was a move away from relying on traditional forms for inspiration. Composers looked to nature, poems and paintings for inspiration, and stories and myths were often used as a starting point.

Activity 10:

Think of a story that you enjoyed – what kind of emotion would this story evoke? Happiness, fear, anger, love ...? How do you think you could successfully express this emotion through music? How would you use the musical elements? Think in terms of the musical elements and write down what the music would sound like in the table below:

Musical element	Description of music
Dynamics	
Rhythm/Metre/Tempo	
Texture	
Structure	
Melody	
Instrumentation	
Tonality	
Harmony	

Activity 11:

If you have access to an instrument, start to compose some musical ideas that could be used for this composition.

Activity 12:

Watch the first five minutes of the video below. This is a Requiem Mass (we know that this musical form dates back to medieval times). However, this is now on a much bigger scale. It is performed in a concert hall with a larger orchestra, choir and soloists. A Requiem Mass is a mass for the dead.

How has Verdi used the musical elements to create the atmosphere suitable for a Requiem?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5_H01AqF-o

You will also notice that the orchestra is much bigger than that of the Classical Era. Can you name the instruments that have been introduced? Revisit the DSO website with the orchestral layouts to help you.

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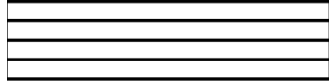
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PiXL Spine – Music – Pitch and Rhythm

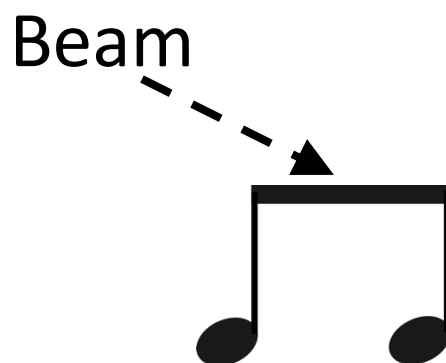
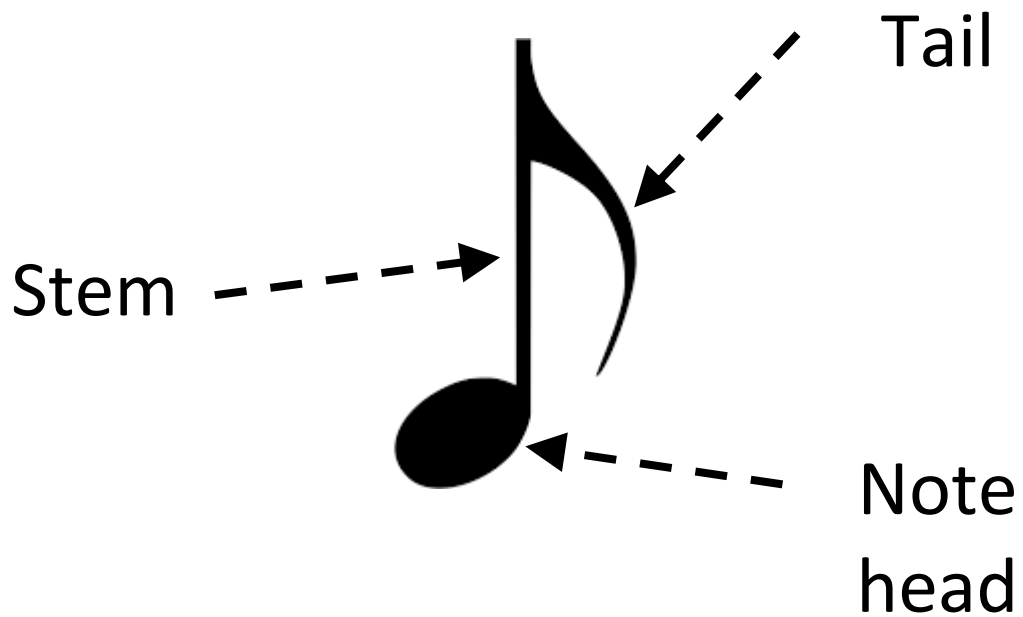
Rhythm

Western music is written on a system of five lines called a staff:



The lines and the spaces indicate which notes should be played; the different rhythm symbols tell us how long each note should be held.

The different parts of the notes are the note head (this can be filled in or hollow), the stem, and the tail. Some notes have double tails, and sometimes the tails can be joined together to make beams.







Rhythm Values

Rhythm notation gives the duration, or length, of a note. We have one set of symbols that tell us how many beats we should play a note for and another collection, called rests, that tell us how long to not play for.

Activity:


Use the following table to memorise the names and durations of each symbol.


Symbol	Name	American Term*	Duration	Rest Symbol
	Semibreve	Whole Note	4 Beats	
	Minim	Half Note	2 Beats	
	Crotchet	Quarter Note	1 Beat	
	Quaver	Eighth Note	1/2 Beat	
	Semiquaver	Sixteenth Note	1/4 Beat	

**We have included the American term as some YouTube videos and blogs that students access may originate from America and therefore use different terms. You will not need to know these for your study at school in the UK.*

Dotted rhythms

It is important to know that if there is a dot after the note head, then the note value increases by half the basic note value. For example:

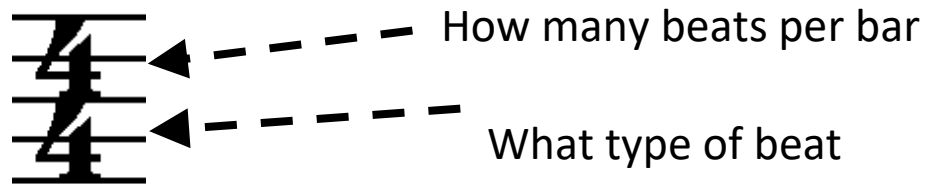
 = lasts for one and a half beats (one + half)

 = lasts for three beats (two + one)

Time Signatures

To make the music easier to read, it is split up into bars. As directed by the time signature at the start of the piece or section, each bar must equal a certain number of beats.

The most common time signature used is 4/4. In fact, it is so common that it is often referred to as common time.












The top number in the time signature states how many beats each bar should be equal to, and the bottom number states what type of beat. 4/4 time means that each bar should be equal to four crotchet beats per bar. The bar can contain any combination of rest and note values, as long as it equals the time signature.

Activity:

Practise reading these example rhythms, either by clapping or playing them on your instrument.

Tip: To ensure that you have a regular pulse to play each rhythm against, use a metronome or a drum machine. Try playing them at different tempos. Use the numbers below to count the rhythms. The numbers in brackets are where you count the pulse but do not play.

Ex.1	Ex.2	Ex.3
		
1 2 3 4	1 + 2 3 4	1 2 + 3 4
Ex.4	Ex.5	Ex.6
		
1 2 3 4 +	1 + 2 + 3 4	1 2 + 3 + 4
Ex.7	Ex.8	Ex.9
		
1 + 2 + (3)(4)	1 + (2) + (3)(4)	(1) 2 + (3)(4)

Activity:

Complete the exercises below by adding **one** note value that would make each bar equal to the 4/4 time signature.

Ex. 1 *



Ex.2 *



Ex.3 *



Ex.4 *



Groupings

When writing rhythms, it is important always to be able to see where the individual beats are and where the centre of the bar is. In 4/4, quavers can be grouped using a single beam (note that the beam is slightly thicker than the stem), either in groups of two or four.

For example:

✓ 

✗ 

✗ 

Compound time

There are two types of time signature: simple and compound. For example, 4/4 and 3/4 are both in simple time because each beat or part divides equally into two. Whereas, common compound time signatures are 6/8 and 12/8 where each beat divides equally into three. For example:



When playing this rhythm, the pulse should be felt on notes 1 and 4.

Activity:

Practise reading these example rhythms, either by clapping or playing them on your instrument.

Tip: Play each rhythm slowly to a regular pulse, counting as you go.

Ex.1 Ex.2 Ex.3

Ex.4 Ex.5 Ex.6

Ex.7 Ex.8 Ex.9

Challenge Activity:

Listen to the following excerpts. Try and work out whether they are in 3/4, 4/4 or 6/8.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDDMYw_IzNE
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GemKqzILV4w>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmCnQDUSO4I>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCFuCYNx-1g>

Answers
1 - 6/8
2 - 4/4
3 - 3/4
4 - 4/4

Pitch

Clefs

Notes are indicated by their position on the staff. As the note gets higher on the staff, the higher it should be played (and vice versa).

A clef is a symbol at the beginning of a piece of music that informs the musician what the pitches on the staff will be. There are two main clefs that you should be aware of: the treble clef and the bass clef.

Treble clef



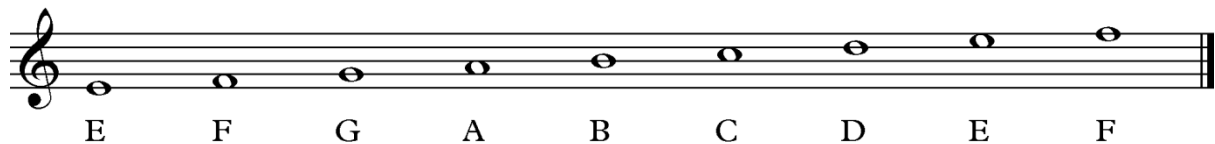
Bass clef



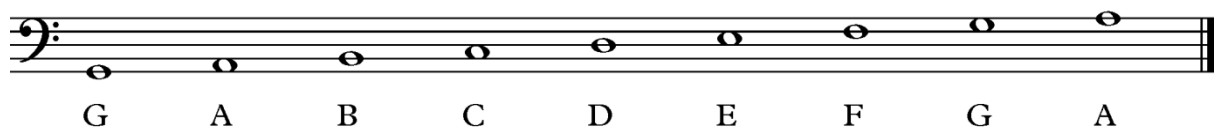
The treble clef is used by higher pitched instruments such as the guitar, flute, violin, and the right hand of the piano.

The bass clef is used by lower pitched instruments such as the bass guitar, bassoon, cello, and the left hand of the piano.

Notes on the treble clef:



Notes on the bass clef:



Activity:

Follow this link and practise identifying the notes on the bass and treble clef.

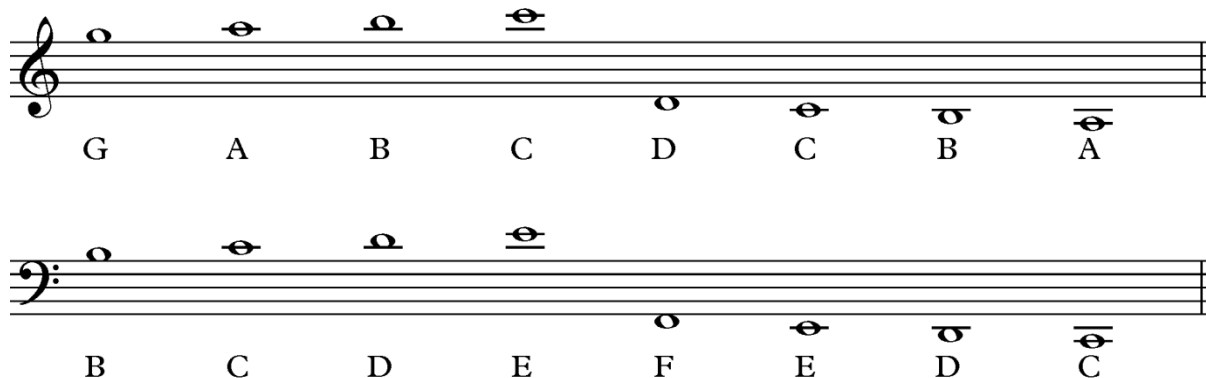
www.musictheory.net/exercises/note/deoeovrvyynvyyvy

Challenge Activity:

Compose your own four bar melody, and notate it using both pitch and rhythm.

Ledger Lines

When a note goes higher or lower, we can extend the staff using ledger lines.



Activity:

Follow this link and practise identifying the notes on the bass and treble clef using ledger lines. www.musictheory.net/exercises/note/drwrwryyynyyyy

Accidentals

A note can be sharpened or flattened using accidentals.

Accidental	Description
#	Placing a sharp sign before a note raises it by one semitone.
b	Placing a flat sign before a note lowers it by one semitone.
♮	Placing a natural sign before a note cancels out a flat or a sharp note.

Activity:

Follow this link and practise identifying the notes on the bass and treble clef with accidentals. www.musictheory.net/exercises/note/drwrwrybynyyyy

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PiXL Spine – Music – Musical Instruments

In this booklet we are going to explore the features of musical instruments in terms of what they are made of, how they are played and the kind of sound they make. In musical terms, this is known as **timbre** or **sonority**.





The terms sonority and timbre relate to the particular quality of tone colour of an instrument. In basic terms, this is what makes a particular musical sound different to another, especially when they are playing at the same **pitch**. For example, a violin and flute can play similar notes, but they sound very different; this is because the flute is a **woodwind** instrument and the violin is a **string** instrument.


Orchestral families

Instruments within the orchestra are grouped into orchestral families, depending on how the sound is produced.

Brass

Brass instruments produce sound by the musician vibrating their lips (a bit like 'blowing a raspberry') into a mouthpiece. The mouthpiece attaches to the instrument, which is made out of brass. Brass instruments are loud and are effective in being used for fanfares or communicating in the military.







Trumpet		The highest-pitched brass instrument. They have valves that, when pressed, change the length of tubing in order to play different notes.
Cornet		Very similar to the trumpet, although the tubing gets gradually wider, creating a mellower tone.
French horn		Made of metal tubing wrapped into a coil. It has a more subdued tone than the trumpet.
Trombone		A lower-pitched instrument than the trumpet. It has a slide that moves in and out in order to alter the length of tubing, which changes the pitch.


Tuba		The lowest-pitched brass instrument in the orchestra.
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Woodwind

Woodwind instruments produce sound when the musician blows air into or across a mouthpiece. These instruments were originally wooden or had a component that was made of wood. Some of these instruments are now made of other materials such as plastic or metal. One example of this is the flute, which was originally made from wood, although is nowadays made out of metal.






Instruments:

Flute		An instrument that creates sound from air being blown across a hole. Keys can be pushed to change the pitch that the instrument produces.
Piccolo		A smaller version of a flute that plays at a higher pitch.
Recorder		Similar to a flute, although air is blown into the end of the instrument as opposed to across a hole.
Clarinet		A versatile woodwind instrument that creates sound by air being blown into a mouthpiece, where a reed vibrates. Clarinets are used in a wide range of genres, such as classical and jazz.
Saxophone		Made from metal, although it is classified as a woodwind instrument because there is a reed in the mouthpiece. Saxophones are commonly used in jazz and pop music.
Oboe		It is similar to a clarinet, although the mouthpiece makes use of two reeds, so it is classified as a double reed instrument. It has a much more piercing tone than a clarinet.

Bassoon		It has a similar tone quality to an oboe because it is also a double reed instrument, although is much larger and so plays at a lower pitch.
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Percussion






Percussion instruments produce sound when they are struck, scraped or shaken. Percussion instruments are divided into two categories: pitched and unpitched. Pitched percussion instruments have the ability to play different notes, whereas unpitched percussion instruments do not. Drums are among the oldest instruments and have been used in different cultures for many centuries. A drum has a membrane that is stretched over a hollow body. It produces sound when the membrane is hit which causes it to vibrate. Many drums use animal skin as a membrane; cow and goat skin are commonly used on drums around the world.


Xylophone		A pitched instrument made with a set of wooden bars hit with a beater.
Glockenspiel		It has a set of metal bars hit with a beater.
Cymbal		A thin metal plate that can be hit with a beater or two cymbals could be hit together.
Snare drum		A drum with a set of stiff wires against the bottom skin.
Bass drum		A large drum that is hit with a beater that makes a low sound.

Timpani		A large drum tuned to a note.
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String

String instruments produce sound when a string vibrates, often as a result of a musician plucking the string or moving a bow across the string. Strings are now usually made from metal or nylon, although originally were made from catgut, which is a type of cord that is made from animals' intestines.

Violin		The highest-pitched string instrument in the orchestra.
Viola		A slightly larger version of a violin and plays at a lower pitch.
Cello		A bass member of the string family. It is larger than the viola and needs to be played sitting down.
Double bass		The lowest-pitched string instrument in the orchestra. It is also often used in jazz music.
Harp		An instrument that has a number of individual strings that are plucked with the performer's hands.

Guitar		An instrument with six strings that are plucked by the musician.
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Activity

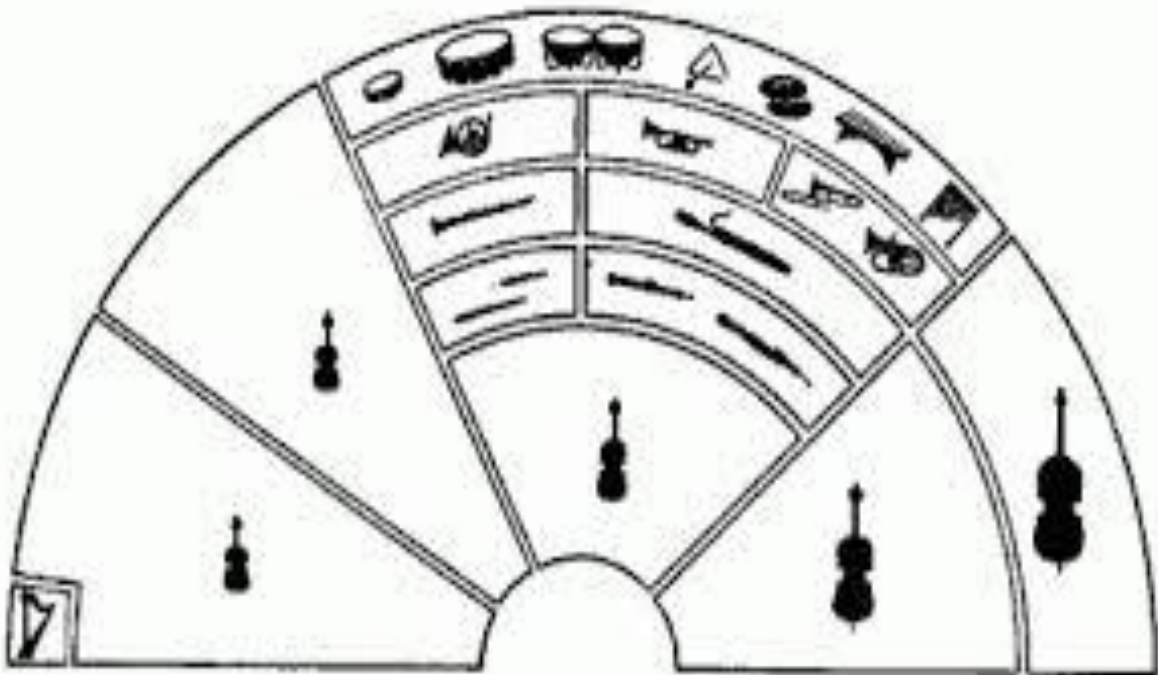
Go to <https://www.mydso.com/dso-kids/learn-and-listen/instruments>

Listen carefully to each instrument and make notes on the kind of sound they make. Think carefully about what material they are made of: wood, metal, plastic, skin etc. Consider how the materials that are used contribute to the overall sound of the instrument.

Using the chart below, describe the tone quality of the instrument.

Instrument	Category	Tone quality
E.g. Trumpet	Brass	Brilliant, loud, strong.

Activity



Research what different orchestral instruments look like and then colour the picture above using a colour code.

Strings – Blue

Woodwind – Green

Brass – Yellow

Percussion – Red

Folk/Traditional Instruments

There are many other instruments from Western culture that do not have a place in an orchestra. However, these instruments are often used for folk and traditional music and are found in many other countries.

Research some of the examples below to see what they look like and listen to how they sound.

Strings: banjo, mandolin, ukulele, bouzouki

Wind: pipe, tin whistle, accordion, harmonica

Percussion: bodhran, cajon, tambour

Brass: sousaphone

Activity

Listen to the following two songs:

'I Will Wait' by Mumford and Sons:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGKfrggWcv0&list=PL13nUeCuXAhctuR6jGPoBXvGtuu-YDg8Z

And 'The Skye Waulking Song' by a Capercalli:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85Yyfs7AjNE>

These bands are folk-rock bands. You will hear instruments that are more traditional and some that are found in a more rock/popular piece.

Comment on the different instrumentation that is used on each of the songs, by completing the grid:

Song	Traditional/acoustic instruments heard	Modern/rock/electronic instruments heard
'I Will Wait' by Mumford and Sons		

'The Skye Waulking Song' by a Capercalli		

African instruments

In Africa, music and dance are often performed together. Drumming is especially inherent to culture itself.

Traditional African instruments are made of wood and skin. There are a number of different drums of different sizes and shapes. The drums are either played with the hand (such as the **djembe**) or with a beater/stick (such as the **dun dun**).

Talking Drums

These are specific drums that are able to mimic the human voice in terms of pitch. The pitch is changed by the tightening of 'thongs' made of gut, and this allows the performer to adjust the pitch. See the video link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4oQJZ2TEVI>

The **Balafon** is another tuned African instrument. This is an instrument made of wood, a bit like a xylophone in Western music, and has between 16-27 keys of different sizes, the smaller the key the higher the pitch. There are gourds underneath the keys that have been hollowed out, and these act as resonators.

See the video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXXhp_bZvck

The **Kora** is a stringed instrument that has strings which are plucked. See the video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wK2ea69Iy2s>

Some people think that the sound made is very similar to a Spanish classical guitar. What similarities can you find?

Indian instruments

There are a number of stringed instruments used in classical Indian music: the sitar, sarod, sarangi and tambura.

The **sitar** is a wooden fretted stringed instrument that has between 18-21 strings. Only six or seven of the strings are plucked and the rest resonate 'in sympathy'. The specific timbre of the sound is the result of the strings vibrating and the creation of overtones This gives this a distinctive sound.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igDsu5QWhpo>



The **sarangi** is also a wooden fretted instrument but is much smaller than the sitar and is bowed, much like a western violin.

The **sarod** is string instrument without frets. The sound is made by plucking the strings.

Tabla are Indian drums. These consist of two single-headed, barrel-shaped small drums: the **tabla** (right drum) and the **baya** (left drum). Each is made out of hollowed-out wood or clay or brass. There are thongs on the sides which, like the talking drum from Africa, can be tightened to change the tension of the membrane and, in turn, this changes the pitch.



The rhythm patterns and sounds made can be heard using the voice which means that this type of drum can also replicate the inflection of speech. See the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXa3Zb-li5o>

Challenge Activity

Research the traditional instruments of Japan and Indonesia. Comment on what materials the instruments are made of and how they are played. Present your research in a table:

Name of instrument and country of origin	Material	How it is played

Challenge Activity 2

Listen to the following extracts of music. Name the instruments you can hear in the examples, and decide what family of instruments they are in. Give a reason for your decision, based on what the instrument is made of or how it is played.

Extract 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyFpZ5MZ7kk>

Extract 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkZipAGsOVA>

<u>Extract 1</u> Instrument	Family	Reason for decision

<u>Extract 2</u> Instrument	Family	Reason for decision

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Bay House Sixth Form A Level Music

Welcome

Firstly, we would like to introduce ourselves to you. Both Mr Langridge and Mr Malcolmson teach the A Level music course at Bay House Sixth Form. If you have any questions relating to the course or need help understanding or navigating some of the resources, we will be happy to help. We are also happy to help if you would like to contact us to receive more directed tasks for which we can offer some feedback. You can contact us on the email address below:

Mr Langridge – selagnridge@bayhouse.gformat.org

Mr Malcolmson – djmalcolmson@bayhouse.gformat.org

Whilst we are currently working in very different and difficult times, please rest assured that the practical nature of the course is at the very heart of what we do; when things begin to return to normal, you will be able to engage with our wide range of performance opportunities, concerts and co-curricular ensembles.

The Course

We will study AQA A Level Music. If you have studied AQA GCSE music the structure of the course and some of the terminology used will be similar but if you have studied another board do not worry, you will soon pick things up.

The course is divided into three different areas: appraising, performing, composing.

Appraising

This builds on the AQA GCSE exam which included general listening (section A) and responses to set-works (Section B).

Being confident in your understanding of the elements and how to describe them will be important as well as your ability to understanding stylistic features of different composers and genres of music. Please do contact us if you would like to receive some personalised tasks to improve your skills ready for September.

We will study: the Baroque Solo Concerto, the Opera's of Mozart, the Classical Piano Music of Chopin, Brahms and Greig, Music for Media and Jazz. As well as familiarising yourself with the key terminology (GCSE bitesize) you could also listen to our set works so that you are more familiar with them in September:

Strand A: Baroque solo concerto

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

Strand B: The operas of Mozart

Composer	Set works
Mozart	<i>Le Nozze di Figaro</i> k.492: Act 1, focusing on: overture No.1 Duettino (Figaro and Susanna, including following recitative) No.3 Cavatina (Figaro, including the previous recitative) No.4 Aria (Bartolo) No.5 Duettino (Susanna and Marcellina) No.6 Aria (Cherubino) No.7 Terzetto (Susanna, Basilio, Count) No.9 Aria (Figaro).

Strand C: The piano music of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg

Composer	Set works
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

Composing

By the end of the course you will have had to produce two compositions. One is a free choice (similar to AQA GCSE) and the other is in the style of a Bach Chorale; the techniques required for writing this will be taught to you. If you would like to work on your composing technique we are happy to have a listen to your GCSE compositions and provide you with some bespoke tasks to help build up your skills.

Performing

By the end of the course you will be required to perform a range of repertoire lasting 10 minutes. For now, continuing your practise and lessons (where possible), would be the most appropriate way to prepare for this.