

huish **HEADSTART**

Transitioning to A Level Music

Here is a list of suggested activities to help prepare for starting A Level Music in September. If you have any queries, please contact Kathrynf@richuish.ac.uk

Tasks are underlined that are required for the course.

1. Playing your Instrument/Singing

Performing is a huge part of A-Level music, so a good challenge would be to practise your instrument/voice for 30 minutes every day. You will need to be working on at least Grade 5 pieces; this might be the perfect goal for you to aim for over the coming weeks. If you have individual lessons and your teacher is offering online classes using Zoom or other platforms, go for it! One board is even offering online grade exams <https://www.mtbexams.com/>. Use the time to practice and make progress on your instrument/voice as a soloist. And there are various online choirs to join if you are a singer – try [Rock Choir Live](#) daily at 3pm, or [Gareth Malone's National Choir](#)



2. Listening

Use Spotify, YouTube or Apple Music to listen to a range of music and commit to listening to something new every day. Create or find playlists for styles or artists you're less familiar with; suggestions are World Music from different countries you haven't studied before, Film Music, Pop and Jazz, Vocal and Instrumental music from Baroque to Modern. Listen to other pieces by composers you're practising, or watch other people's performances of the piece(s) you're

learning to play/sing. YouTube [scrolling scores](#) are fantastic way to simultaneously hear and see what composers have created.



3. Extended Writing

Complete an open ended piece of writing: a project style piece of work that focuses on a composer, piece or style of music. You can create this in any way that you wish – podcast, Powerpoint, essay, blog etc. Here are some suggestions:

"What's the point of having music in a film?"
"What is Jazz?"
"The greatest composers were all born in the 18th Century"
"Serialism is pointless"
"Popular music isn't really music"
"Music is only Sound & Silence"

4. Theory

Music theory is possibly the least favourite part of the subject for many students, but it is crucial part of the course that helps your understanding of (and achievement in) all the other parts like performing and composing. Ideally you will be able to read notation and recognise symbols and words, about the standard of Grade 5 theory, so the website [mymusictheory](http://mymusictheory.com) is a good place to start. Scroll down and select lessons from the right, and complete the exercises on manuscript paper (if you haven't got any at home, you can print it from online, write digitally on a pdf or tablet screen, or use a free notation system like [Noteflight](http://Noteflight.com)). Another great website for learning theory is earmaster.com – there's lots of free material but you can subscribe for only £3 per month to access lots more.



5. Watching

There is currently a wealth of online material that you can tune in to. Not only do we have the gift of YouTube, but during lockdown a number of places are streaming content for free.

I thoroughly encourage you to watch concerts, musicals, operas, performances and lectures. Here are some suggestions:

[Mozart Opera Online with ROH](#)

[The Shows Must Go On – Andrew Lloyd Webber](#)

Ted talks <https://www.ted.com/playlists/browse?topics=music>

[BBC documentaries on the History of Music](#)

[Stewart Copeland's Adventures in Music](#)

Fab composer [Leonard Bernstein did a series of cool lectures](#) about music and philosophy

Heaps of [documentaries on music](#) in a YouTube playlist



5. Reading

If you enjoy reading, here are a few links to books that I recommend:

[The Story of Music by Howard Goodall](#) (goes alongside the BBC documentaries)

[How Music Works by John Powell](#)

[Music: A Very Short Introduction by Nicholas Cook](#)

[Listen to This by Alex Ross](#)

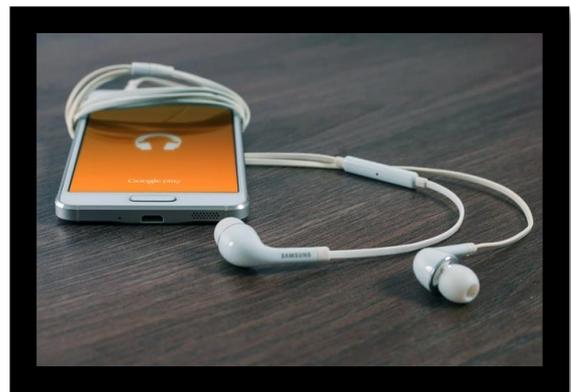
6. Podcasts

There are so many out there, so links are below to a few to get you started. You can listen whilst you do your daily exercise or help around the house.

[The Listening Service BBC Radio 3](#)

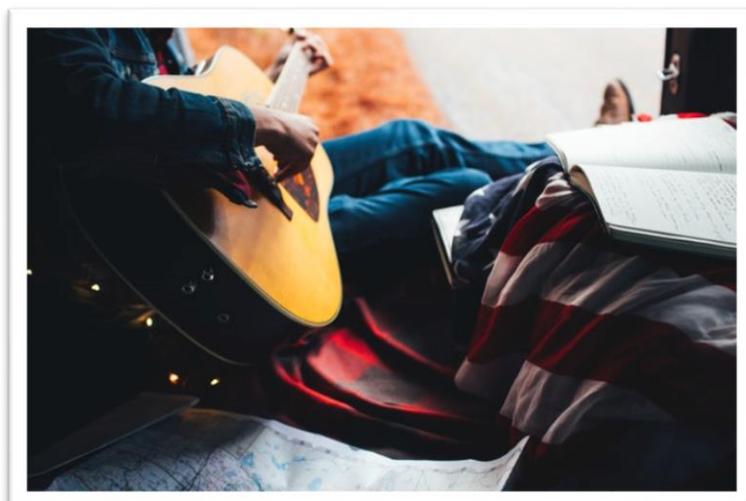
[San Francisco Symphony: Programme Notes](#)

[Composer of the Week](#)



7. Composing

This could be harder during lockdown, depending on what technology you have at home. Garageband is free on IOS devices for experimenting with loops alongside your own recorded tracks, or alternatively [Noteflight](#) and [MuseScore](#) are free score-writing programmes that you can work on now and export as MIDI later (to open with Sibelius or Logic at college).



However, coming up with new melodies or material on your instrument and recording or notating them doesn't require software! Be creative and experiment. Maybe create some music based on the listening or writing projects that you've worked on?



Music is an academic and creative subject that can transport you to a different place, change your mood (and those around you) – adding it into your daily or weekly routine in various ways will certainly help during this unusual time.

Keep expanding your knowledge, experience and horizons in music, to give you the best tools for starting the A Level Music course at Richard Huish College.

Looking forward to meeting you in September!