



music  
AT RIPLEY ST THOMAS

A-Level Music  
**Bridging Unit**  
2023

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## Equipment

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Before the course starts in September you will need to get the following pieces of essential equipment:

- Decent pencils (ideally a refillable mechanical pencil which remains sharp) and erasers
- A set of coloured fineliner pens for score analysis (you will need the following colours: yellow, orange, red, pink, purple, blue, green, brown)
- An A4 ringbinder or lever arch file with a set of dividers
- File paper and manuscript paper
- The Edexcel AS/A Level Anthology of Music (Edexcel AS/A Level Music 2016)  
[ISBN: 978-1292118369]

## Expectations

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To be successful in this course, you are expected to:

- attend all timetabled lessons with all of the necessary equipment;
- catch up with any work missed as a result of ill health;
- keep your folder and all notes organised and up to date;
- be having regular, ideally weekly, lessons on your main instrument or voice;
- undertake a structured practice regime, dedicating at least half an hour a day to developing your playing or singing;
- complete all work to the best of your ability, by the given deadlines;
- contribute to the musical life of the department through Upper School Choir (compulsory for all pupils taking GCSE or A level music) and other ensembles or performances as relevant.

**The next two pages provide a series of bridging tasks for you to complete before September. If you have questions or concerns about any of it, please do get in touch.**

# Transition tasks

## Task 1: Reading

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Read **any one** (or two, or all three) of the following books:

- Stephen Fry's *Incomplete and utter history of classical music* (ISBN: 0330438565)
- Andrew Gant's *Music: ideas in profile* (ISBN: 178125642X)
- Nicholas Cook's *Music: a very short introduction* (ISBN: 0192853821)

*\*If it helps you to choose which one to read, the books are listed above in order of readability (the most accessible is at the top).*

## Task 2: Presenting a balanced argument

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**'Writing about music is like dancing about architecture - it's a really stupid thing to want to do.'** Elvis Costello, in an interview by Timothy White entitled 'A Man out of Time Beats the Clock.' *Musician* magazine No. 60 (October 1983), p. 52.

In around 750 words (10% allowance either way), give your opinion on the statement above whilst trying to present a balanced argument throughout. *Your work should be typed using **double line spacing**.*

## Task 3: Music theory

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### Option 1: For pupils who have completed their Grade 5 (or higher) Theory

Revisit the syllabus for Grade 5 Theory and double check that you are happy with all aspects of it. If you have your marksheet from when you sat the paper, review your results and concentrate on any area where you got anything less than full marks.

### Option 2: For pupils who have not yet completed their Grade 5 (or higher) Theory

We expect that all A level Musicians will be at Grade 5 standard by October half term in Year 12 and we will support you to get there. Before starting, it would be beneficial for you to start working through the ABRSM (or Trinity) Music Theory workbooks up to Grade 5.

#### **Task 4: Performance**

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Prepare a performance on your main instrument (or voice) which you think would be suitable for an A level recital. You should prepare something which either uses a backing track (your responsibility) or doesn't require accompaniment.

**Performances will take place in the second week in September.**

#### **Task 5: Listening and appraising**

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Listen to the track *Wayfarin' stranger etc.* (Conspirare: A company of voices, 2009)

<https://open.spotify.com/track/4e4ImoIL96GInMdybyKrKS?si=8fIXPfYQQ16pmu24n1D2IA>

1. Write a **chronological account** of this track, describing the changes in style, instrumentation, tempo, texture, rhythm, melody, harmony, &c. as the piece progresses.
2. Write a brief paragraph to outline your opinions on this piece of music. Your writing should always be backed up by musical reasons for your answers, not simply subjective description.

#### **Task 6: Listening diary**

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**Keep a log of the music which you listen to from day to day.** Consider the following things when choosing things for your daily playlists:

- Is your listening varied, or do you stick to the same artists/composers?
- Does your listening come from a wide section of music history?
- Does some of your listening come from other cultures and countries?
- Do you listen to some music each day without other distractions?
- Do you sometimes follow the sheet music whilst listening?

@Ripley\_Music on Twitter posts recommended daily listening – give it a go!