

A stained glass window with a gothic arch. The central figure is Saint Cecilia, depicted in a green and red robe, playing a harp. Above her is a banner with the text 'S. CECILIA'. The window is surrounded by a decorative border of floral and geometric patterns.

**Saint  
Cecilia's**

**A-Level  
Music**

**Bridging  
Work 2019**

## Music A-Level – introduction and background work

The most important difference in the leap from GCSE to A-Level is the need for you to take the initiative about your learning. You will hear a lot from your subject teachers, mentors and careers advisors about the importance of ‘reading around the subject’; what does this mean in music?



First of all, your aural and harmony skills are at the heart of all musical knowledge. You need to be practising aural exercises on a regular basis. A good book that has exercises and advice on aural skills is ***Aural matters***, by David Bowman and Paul Terry. You can create your own exercises by listening to a piece of music and setting yourself some questions, such as ‘what instruments are playing, what is the form, who is the composer, what modulation can you hear?’



You should develop your harmony skills in your spare time – whether by learning chord progressions at the keyboard, by analysing pieces of music you know from a harmonic perspective, or by composing. At this level, you should be continuously practising these skills, just as you practise your instrument.

For the performing element of your course, you need to perform solos regularly, either within lessons or outside of school. There will be regular concerts for you to perform in, and you should try to do these as much as possible. The more practice the better. Keep stretching yourself, learn new pieces, take risks, but more importantly enjoy what you are doing.

You are expected to take a central role in the music department and are required to be part of at least one extra-curricular music group, such as the orchestra or the choir. If what you want isn’t available, set it up yourself and arrange a time to rehearse each week and organise your own concerts.



You need to look beyond the requirements of the A level syllabus and explore music. You should read ***BBC Music Magazine*** and/or ***Gramophone*** each month – both come with free CDs and programme notes. The more you know about music, the easier the course will become. Plan to share a magazine and CD between a group of you so it works out cheaper. Go to the library and borrow CDs and listen to them critically.

Try to get to as many concerts as you can. We shall try to organise a few for you this term, but you should try to organise your own. Go in groups, make it a fun evening out. Tickets can cost as little as £4!



With written tasks, you should explore music resources in the department, in your local library and online. An essential resource is the ***New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians***. This will give you a good overview of topics, and is free to use through your local library online service. Another good source is ***Grout - A History of Western Music***. Read around the works and composers to gain a deeper understanding.

Try to compose music as much as possible. Don’t limit yourself to just one type of music, but explore different styles or genres, write for different instruments, try to copy a composers or songwriters style.

## **Bridging Unit – A-Level Music**

This bridging unit must be completed before the start of your course in September. Failure to complete it all will result in your place being reviewed. Any queries can be directed to [jwells@saintcecilias.london](mailto:jwells@saintcecilias.london)

- 1) Access the following website and read all the tutorials on scales, intervals, chords and harmony and make your own summary notes:  
<http://www.wmich.edu/mus-history/TheoryHelp/TheoryHelp.html>

- 2) Research into the genre 'Rondo'. It is a musical structure. Define what it is and the typical features in a Rondo. Find 4 different examples of a Rondo by 4 different composers. It can be for a solo instrument or an ensemble such as an orchestra or band.

Ensure you list all the sources you have used to find out the information by creating a bibliography.

(see this site to help you)

<http://www.factmonster.com/homework/t8biblio.html>

- 3) Choose 1 of your 4 pieces, find the music (print out and recording) and complete an analysis of the structure of the piece. Label each section of the music. State the key and describe at least one musical feature (melody, rhythm, tempo, texture, dynamics, articulation, instrumentation) in each section of the rondo.

You can find free scores of things not in copyright on IMSLP by searching composer and title of the piece. Try searching for 'Rondo' and see what scores you can find.

<http://imslp.org>

- 4) Compose an original rondo for your instrument or your choice of instrument. It should have at least 5 sections. You need to write out the music on manuscript paper and provide a recording of your piece. You may use music software if you wish (such as Sibelius, Finale or GarageBand/Logic/Cubase)
- 5) Prepare a Grade 5 piece (or higher) to perform in a concert in the first week you start at Saint Cecilia's. Work on a new piece over the summer – do not choose something you've played before. Do not choose something too difficult, you need to be able to play it perfectly and should focus on dynamics, articulation, phrasing and shaping – not just getting the notes correct. It would be advisable to work with your instrumental/voice teacher over the summer if possible.

## **A-Level Music guidance: Submitting Written Work**

All written work should be correctly structured and formatted. Ensure you follow the formatting requirements below:

### **Word**

- Create a header with your name, unit number and assignment number.
- Insert page numbers in the footer.
- Include a title (centred, bold and a larger font).
- Ensure the text is justified (not left align).
- Include referencing (either footnotes or Harvard style) and a bibliography.

### **Other formats**

Where you use other formats for written or presentation work, make sure you follow similar principles (especially putting your name, unit and assignment number on the work).

### **Referencing**

You should reference where you got your information from (either by using in-text citations or footnotes) whenever you use a source in your work:

- as a specific reference to information or facts from the source
- as a direct quotation (the same words as the original)
- in a paraphrase (a rewording of the original).<sup>1</sup>

Use the format you feel most confident using (see separate referencing guides for information).

### **Bibliography**

Make sure you have an alphabetical, correctly formatted bibliography at the end of your piece of work.

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<sup>1</sup> Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2009) *Using Sources: A Guide for Students: Find it – Check it – Credit it*. Coventry: The Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator