

YEAR 12 – BRIDGING UNITS

A-LEVEL MUSIC



ST HILDA'S
COLLEGE

The 6th Form
@ St Hilda's

bridging
units

Name:

Anything is

POSSIBLE

Exam period 2028

Contents

This is a 10-hour study to prepare effectively for the A-Level Music course. The activities are broken down into hour long sessions. As part of this guide, you will need to listen to the pieces in their entirety. The focus for this preparation is to familiarise yourself with the set works and the terminology and features of them.

Please familiarise yourself with the syllabus which can be found using the QR code



The three main areas of study are;

- **Area of Study A - The Western Classical Tradition**
- **Area of Study B – Rock and Pop Music**
- **Area of Study E - Into the Twentieth Century**

Time in hours	Focus point
1	Listen to the set works in their entirety
2	Overview of sonata form
3	Mapping out of sonata form in Haydn Symphony
4	Focus on the development section of the Haydn Symphony
5	Study of Schubert's Symphony with stylistic comparison to Haydn
6	Debussy harmonic and device tracker
7	Poulenc structure and texture breakdown
8	Play through possible performance pieces
9	Play through possible performance pieces
10	Melodic dictation practise

Anything is

POSSIBLE

Set Works

Area of Study A: The Western Classical Tradition

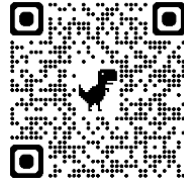
The Development of the Symphony (1760–1830)

- **Haydn: Symphony No. 100 in G major "Military"** (All movements required for A level) - In depth study
- **Schubert: Symphony No. 5 in B flat major- General study**

Area of Study E: Into the Twentieth Century

Impressionism, Expressionism, and Neo-classicism

- **Poulenc: Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano** (Movement I)
- **Debussy: "Fêtes" from Trois Nocturnes**

Set Work	QR Link
Haydn Symphony No. 100 in G Major	
Schubert Symphony No.5 in B flat major	
Poulenc Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano	
Debussy Fetes from Trois Nocturnes	

Anything is

POSSIBLE

Familiarisation of the set works

Listen to the set works and use the scores provided to follow them through.

Haydn 100	Schubert Symphony	Poulenc Trio	Debussy Fetes
			

Sonata Form Structure

Sonata form (or sonata-allegro form) is a foundational musical structure used primarily in the first movements of symphonies, sonatas, and string quartets. Originating in the Classical era, it functions like a three-act play or a musical debate, divided into the **Exposition**, **Development**, and **Recapitulation**.

Listen to the Haydn and Schubert symphonies to see if you can hear the sections in the music.

The Three Main Sections

1. The Exposition

Think of this as the setup, where the composer introduces the main musical ideas and establishes a dramatic conflict.

- **First Theme:** Introduced in the home key (the "tonic"), establishing the initial foundation of the piece.
- **Transition:** A connecting passage that creates tension and modulates (changes) to a new, closely related key.
- **Second Theme:** A contrasting melodic idea played in the new key. Often, it is more lyrical and softer than the first theme.
- **Closing Section:** A final sequence of themes that solidifies the new key and brings the exposition to a close. (The entire exposition is usually played twice!).

2. The Development

This is the dramatic climax or "argument" of the piece. The composer takes the themes from the Exposition and breaks them apart, recombines them, and runs them through various keys. It is harmonically unstable, full of suspense, and resolves only when it prepares to return to the home key.

3. The Recapitulation

This is the resolution or "homecoming." The musical tension is resolved as the themes heard in the Exposition return—but with a crucial twist.

- **First Theme:** Returns exactly as it was in the Exposition, firmly back in the home key.
- **Transition:** Altered so that the music *does not* modulate to a new key.
- **Second Theme:** Restated, but transposed so that it remains in the home key alongside the first theme, resolving the original harmonic conflict.

Using the score, write the bar lines of where you think the sections happen in each other symphonies.

Anything is

POSSIBLE

Analysis of the sonata sections - Haydn

Online resources:



Task: Complete the table below outlining the sections of movement I, the bar numbers and the instruments that play the main themes.

Haydn Symphony 100 Sonata Form 1st Movement

Section	Bar numbers	Instrumentation
Introduction		
Exposition • First subject • Transition • Second subject • Codetta		
Development		
Recapitulation		
Coda		

Anything is

POSSIBLE

Focus on the development section of the Haydn Symphony

Task: Zoom in on the *Development* section of the same Haydn movement. Colour-code the use of specific composition devices: motif fragmentation, sequence, imitation, and pedal points.

You are free to research the piece and use the guide to help you. Use the QR code to find.



Anything is

POSSIBLE

Comparison between Schubert and Haydn

Task: Listen to **Schubert's Symphony No. 5, Movement 1**. Compare his harmonic language to Haydn's. Note where Schubert introduces unexpected tonal shifts or chromaticism that leans away from strict Classical rules.

Create a comparison grid highlighting 3 key differences in orchestration, harmony, and phrasing between the Haydn and Schubert movements.

The table below can be used as a template;

Musical Element	Haydn	Schubert	Main difference
Orchestration			
Harmony			
Phrasing			

You can use these questions to help you;

Orchestration

- Which instruments are most noticeable?
- Is the texture light or full?
- How are the strings and wind instruments used?

Harmony

- Does the music stay mostly in one key or change keys often?
- Does the harmony sound simple and predictable or more colourful and unexpected?
- Are there any chromatic notes?

Phrasing

- Are the phrases short and balanced or long and flowing?
- Can you clearly hear where one phrase ends and another begins?
- Does the melody sound conversational or lyrical?

Anything is

POSSIBLE

Area of Study E (Into the 20th Century) & Exam Technique

Impressionism under the Microscope

Below are some 20th century non-functional harmonic structures. Make sure you are familiar with these terms. Once you have done this, try to find an example of each one in the Debussy score.

A **whole-tone scale** is a musical scale consisting entirely of intervals of a whole step (a whole tone). Because every adjacent note is separated by the same distance—exactly two semitones on a piano—the scale is symmetrical and contains exactly six notes per octave.

Pentatonic fragments are small, easily digestible groupings of 2 to 5 notes taken from the broader 5-note pentatonic scale. A pentatonic scale uses notes 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 of a scale.

Parallel chords refer to a progression where a specific chord shape (like a major seventh or a minor triad) slides up or down the fretboard or keyboard without changing its intervallic quality.

Planing is the technique of moving a chord or voicing up or down in pitch while keeping the exact same internal interval structure.

Task: Open the score for **Debussy's Three Nocturnes, No. 2 (*Fêtes*)**. Identify and label 20th-century non-functional harmonic structures: whole-tone scales, pentatonic fragments, parallel chords, and planing.

Technique	Bar numbers
Whole tone scale	
Pentatonic fragments	
Parallel chords	
Planing	

Anything is

POSSIBLE

Neoclassical Texture (Poulenc)

Task: Analyse **Poulenc's Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano, Movement I**. Focus on how he blends modern dissonance with classical phrasing shapes.

Complete the table giving a structural breakdown explaining how this movement mimics classical structures while utilizing 20th-century harmony.

Section	Bars	What happens?	Classical features
Intro			
Theme 1			
Transition			
Theme 2			
Development			
Recapitulation			
Ending/Coda			

Anything is

POSSIBLE

Performance Preparation

Consider the pieces you might like to use for your performance repertoire. The requirements are given below;

The three Areas of Study are;

1. Area of study A – Western Classical Tradition
2. Area of study B – Rock and Pop
3. Area of study E – Into the twentieth century

Unlike the GCSE performance component, the assessment will be conducted by an external examiner who comes to the school to hear the recital. If you need an accompanist, you need to organise this. You will need to supply a score for the examiner.

Have a look at the study guide which gives you more detail about the course. You are doing the Performance course which has 35% performance with 25% composition. The QR code to the course is below;



Anything is

POSSIBLE

Melodic and Rhythmic Dictation

Task: Work through the audio exercises on the link and try and complete as many of the melodic and rhythmic dictation exercises as possible. One link is the audio and one is the PDF with the notation and questions.

Here are 101 dictation exercises following different styles you can practice with.

Audio Link	PDF link
	