

Welcome to the Music Department at Hills Road. We have added this page to our website to help you access all the information you may need before you start at Hills Road.

Dear Musician,

We are delighted to welcome you to the Music Department at Hills Road and hope that you will have a very enriching musical time here. No doubt many of you will be involved in musical activities over the course of the summer break. Below are a few suggestions to help you prepare for the start of the AS course. These could be tackled once you have enrolled at the start of the Autumn Term, in the time before the main timetable commences. Alternatively, you could tackle them over the summer holidays if your schedule allows.

1. Performance preparation

In the Autumn Term you will have some solo performance assessments and it would be a good idea to start thinking about suitable music for the first of these which will take place just before the Autumn half-term break in mid-October. The required standard is Grade 5 (or above), and ideally you should choose a piece in consultation with your singing or instrumental teacher. If you do not currently have a teacher you **must** organise one if you are not having lessons through Hills Road. It is not sensible to tackle this 30% component of the course without *specialist* input. The College employs its own team of professional instrumental teachers, which can be accessed via the following link <http://www.hillsroad.ac.uk/MusicCvs.pdf>

Please note that the biggest mistake people make in performance assessments is choosing to play music that is unnecessarily difficult! It is possible to gain full marks for an extremely well played performance of a Grade 5 piece. Playing a piece that is too difficult for you may result in a low mark, as the mark scheme is very demanding.

2. Theory

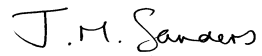
A number of you will have already done plenty of theory work as part of your musical studies so far. If not, our suggestion is to aim to have a theory level equivalent to Grade 5 standard or above. You can work at this yourself by purchasing Theory of Music workbooks from any good music shop, and the AB Guide to Music Theory by Eric Cole is a good resource. Early in the Autumn Term we will ask you to complete a theory paper of Grade 5 standard to see how you are getting on.

3. Aural

Developing a strong musical ear is a key part of your musicianship. You should try to practise both practical aural skills (e.g. notating a short melody / rhythm, recognising chords and cadences) and context aural skills (suggesting when a piece of music was written and by whom). Try to practise these skills with music that you listen to and

aim to expand your listening knowledge through tuning in to Classic FM, Radio 3 or selected concerts from the Summer proms season (www.bbc.co.uk/proms). You will be involved in Composing work throughout your AS course so you could also consider composing techniques as you listen to different works.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.M. Sanders". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a distinct loop at the end of the name.

Joss Sanders
Director of Music