

Music BA (Hons)

First-year course outline:

Your first-year course ('Prelims 2017') is made up of the following compulsory parts:

- 1) Analysis – examined by a 3-hour exam at the end of the academic year;
- 2) Techniques of Composition – examined by a week-long 'take-away' paper at the end of the academic year, and a keyboard skills exam;
- 3) Special History Topics – 3-hour exam at the end of the academic year;

You also have to choose two of the following options:

- 4) Issues in the History of Music – 2-hour exam at the end of academic year;
- 5) Composition – portfolio of compositions and listening exam
- 6) Solo performance – 14-minute exam at end of the academic year
- 7) Extended essay – 4000- 5000 word essay on any subject, submitted at end of year.

In total, then, you will take 5 options which will be equally weighted towards your final Prelims mark. Below are some additional points regarding the compulsory papers.

- 1) Analysis – this paper aims to investigate the ways in which composers organised their musical processes in the eighteenth-century. This involves the understanding of various musical forms, including sonata forms, as well as earlier Baroque dance movements and instrumental genres. It is a repertoire-based course that builds on work you may have done in your A-level/Baccalaureate or theory courses at school.
- 2) Techniques of Composition – this paper involves writing musical pastiche (i.e. music in the style of certain composers) and keyboard skills. You must learn to write simple counterpoint in the style of sixteenth-century composers, particularly Palestrina, to compose according to figured-bass conventions and to begin to imitate later eighteenth-century harmony such as string quartets. In addition you will be required to sit a keyboard skills exam which will assess your ability to realise a figured bass, and to read a three-voice or four-part composition.
- 3) Special History topics – this is a requisite history exam that will examine your understanding of three periods of music history. The topics this year are: **Machaut's songs; Orlando di Lasso; issues in Historically-Informed Performance; Strauss and Women; Global Hip-hop.** You will probably have tutorials on all of these topics at some point in the first year, but you need only answer on three of them in the exam.

Teaching:

Your teaching will take the form of lectures in the music faculty, and tutorials in college. Tutorials involve one or two students and the tutor. You will be required to prepare a piece of work (harmony exercise, essay or essay plan) for each tutorial. In your first term, you will likely have three or four lectures a week in the faculty, and 2 (or occasionally 3) tutorials a week in college.

Michaelmas Term 2017

Oxford University names the first, winter term of each academic year as the Michaelmas term. The second and third are labelled Hilary and Trinity respectively. In your first Michaelmas, we will be focussing on Analysis and Techniques. We shall also begin to think critically about various traditions of Music making and the academic discipline of Musicology. The pieces of music which we will be examining in our analysis tutorials are listed below. You may wish to listen to these before you arrive

to give you an idea of the sort of movements that you will encounter in the exam. You may find scores to many of these on the Petrucci Music library available on imslp.org. **NB this is not compulsory before you come up!**

Mozart, Duo for Violin and Viola K. 423 (2nd movement)

Mozart, Piano Sonata in F major, K. 280 (3rd movement)

Haydn, Keyboard sonata in c minor, Hob. XVI:20 (1st movement)

Mozart, Piano Sonata in F major, K. 280 (3rd movement)

Mozart, Piano Sonata in F major, K.332 (2nd movement)

Mozart String Quartet in C major, K. 465 (2nd movement)

Scarlatti, Sonata in f sharp minor, K. 142

C.P.E. Bach, Rondo in E major WQ. 57/1

Preparatory reading

The music faculty will provide you with a reading list in due course. However, I have suggested some titles below in which I believe it is worth investing. (I will also send through a reading list with some additional useful titles which you may wish to purchase.)

Analysis:

Hepokoski, James and Warren Darcy. *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, types and deformations in the late eighteenth-century sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). [This is a central text in the analysis course and we will be using it extensively in Michaelmas. It is quite expensive in new hardback form so try to find a second-hand copy. There are plenty of copies in the college and university libraries, however, so don't worry if you can't find a copy.]

Rosen, Charles. *The Classical Style* new. ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 2005). [A 'classic' text with which you should be familiar, even if it has now been superseded by more recent approaches. There will be second-hand copies available either in Oxford or on Amazon.]

Musicology:

Beard, David and Kenneth Cloag. *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2005). [This offers a survey of some critical terms in musicology, and provides a useful bibliography.]

Taruskin, Richard. *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). [Taruskin is a writer who divides opinion but his essays are always thought-provoking and you will encounter his writing at some point in your three years.]

Grout, Donald, Peter Burkholder and Claude Palisca, 7th ed. *A History of Western Music* (New York: Norton, 2006). [This is a music-history primer which has been used pedagogically for numerous generations of students. It is not without its flaws, but if you feel that your grasp of a musical historical narrative is a little unsure, this might be a good place to start.]

Techniques:

Ledbetter, David. *Continuo Playing according to Handel: his figured bass exercises* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). [This is the most important book for figured bass. You will almost

certainly be able to pick up a cheap second-hand copy in Oxford or from your college 'parents'.]

Butterworth Anna. *Harmony in Practice* (London: ABRSM 1999) [You may have encountered this book at school - if you are feeling unsure about your grasp of harmony, then this is a good primer for the Prelims course.]

Before you come up...

There is nothing that you absolutely have to do before you come up. However, you may want to begin to read the books suggested above. It would also be a good idea to listen to as much music from the eighteenth century as you can. Local libraries are good sources of scores and recordings, as is ismp and youtube. You may have access to various music-sharing websites or to the naxos music library. The keyboard music of J.S.Bach, and the string quartets/keyboard sonatas of Mozart and Haydn are core repertoire, some examples of which you should aim to play through or experience. The 48 preludes and fugues by Bach are a very useful synopsis of his counterpoint and you are encouraged to play through as many as possible before October:

Bach, Johann Sebastian. *The Well-tempered Clavier Bk. 1* (ABRSM edition with Tovey's commentaries).

You should also begin to think about which two of the optional courses you will want to take for Prelims, although I will offer advice when you arrive in October.

In order to prepare yourself for the (compulsory) special topics exam, you can try to encounter the music of Machaut, Orlando di Lasso [Lassus], Richard Strauss and examples of Hip-Hop. Listening to as many of these examples as possible is an excellent preparation. Below are some potential books if you have opportunity to borrow them from a library, or to purchase. Don't worry if you can't get hold of them as they will be available in Oxford. Any background information from reputable sources is useful!

Leach, Elizabeth Eva. *Guillaume de Machaut: Secretary, Poet, Musician* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

James Haar (ed.). *European Music, 1520-1640* (Woodbridge & Rochester: Boydell Press, 2006).

Gilliam, Bryan. *The Life of Richard Strauss* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999)

Chang, Jeff. *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2005).

I am very much looking forward to meeting you in October, and I'm delighted to be your tutor for the next three years. If you have any concerns or questions regarding your academic course, then please do be in contact. Best wishes

Ben

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