

YEAR 11 PREPARATION FOR YEAR 12

To be completed by Monday 9th September 2024.

All students will undertake the study of J.S.Bach's approach to composition with a particular focus on his harmonisation of chorales in their development of knowledge of harmony and compositional techniques as part of the A-Level course.

To prepare for this, please undertake the following activities and tasks:

WATCH:

Please start by watching the following video on YouTube which outlines the basic process of harmonising chords from a set melody:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyLPD32f14c>

This will give you all the basics you need to undertake the following activities. However, if you would like to explore this further and look at some of the more advanced aspects of 4-part harmony, you can watch any of the following videos. Please note that all of this will be covered as part of the A-Level course so it is not essential summer work

- How to modulate: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tgyq6RfIF6c>
- Pivot Chords: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07kqN85MMc8>
- Chord Progressions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2K-PpCJWMHg>
- How to use 6-4 5-3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZh2MWRDRaU>
- Lesson/Exercises: <https://www.musictheory.net/lessons>

For more general music theory guidance please visit www.musictheory.net.

READ:

To gain a better understanding of Bach's approach to composition and his style of music, please read through the document below, taking notes and highlighting key passages.

For further insight into Bach's approach to chorale harmonisation please feel free to visit the site below:

- <https://www.classicfm.com/composers/bach/guides/chorales-guide/>

LISTEN:

Please use the link below to find a Spotify Playlist of Bach's chorales. You are not expected to listen to all of these, but please listen to a selection while you are reading the article or completing the task to get used to the sound world that Bach created.

- <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3MLDuNybl1eOu8NCwIOVJP?si=UemBzKnPRkWLIY7BxBcROg&pi=e-ZK9FXMhtSLid&nd=1&dlsi=167ec35eedce4c11>

DO:

Please complete the Alto, Tenor and Bass parts for the exercise below. The piece is in F major and the cadence is Perfect (V- I).

Task

The image shows a musical score for piano in F major. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The melody in the treble clef consists of the following notes: F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), and F4 (half note with a fermata). The alto, tenor, and bass staves are empty, indicating that the student is to complete these parts. The piece ends with a double bar line.

READ

Bach Article:

Johann Sebastian Bach is widely regarded as one of the greatest composers of all time, known for his profound influence on the Baroque period and Western classical music as a whole. His compositions are celebrated for their intellectual depth, technical command, and artistic beauty.

Bach's music is characterised by its intricate counterpoint, a technique involving the weaving of multiple independent melodies to create a harmonious whole. This is evident in his *The Art of Fugue* (BWV 1080), where he masterfully combines several voices, each maintaining its own melodic integrity while contributing to the overall structure. His ability to interlace these voices with such precision and creativity remains unparalleled.

Harmony in Bach's works is equally noteworthy. He had a unique talent for blending chords and progressions in a way that enhanced the emotional and expressive content of his music. This sophisticated use of harmony often involved unexpected shifts and rich, complex chord structures. A prime example is the *Mass in B minor* (BWV 232), which has been a source of study and admiration for musicians and composers for centuries.

Rhythmically, Bach's compositions are marked by their vitality and inventiveness. He often employed syncopation, hemiola, and intricate rhythmic patterns that added a dynamic and lively quality to his music. His *Brandenburg Concertos* (BWV 1046–1051), for instance, showcase a variety of rhythmic styles and tempos, reflecting both courtly elegance and popular dance forms of his time.

Melody in Bach's music is another defining feature. His themes are often memorable and richly ornamented, demonstrating a keen sense of lyricism. Whether in his sacred cantatas, instrumental works, or keyboard compositions, Bach's melodies are distinguished by their clarity, expressiveness, and ability to convey deep emotion. The *Well-Tempered Clavier* (BWV 846–893) provides excellent examples of his melodic inventiveness and technical prowess.

Furthermore, Bach's use of structure and form exhibits a remarkable balance between complexity and coherence. His compositions often adhere to well-defined forms such as the concerto grosso, sonata, and suite, yet within these forms, he explored a wide range of textures and variations. This structural mastery is evident in the *Goldberg Variations* (BWV 988), ensuring that his music is both intellectually stimulating and aesthetically pleasing.

In addition to his compositional prowess, Bach's skill as an organist and harpsichordist greatly influenced his keyboard works. His intimate understanding of these instruments allowed him to exploit their capabilities fully, resulting in compositions that are both technically demanding and richly expressive. His *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor* (BWV 565) for organ is a quintessential piece that demonstrates his virtuosic command of the instrument.

Overall, Johann Sebastian Bach's music is a testament to his genius and remains a cornerstone of the classical repertoire. His ability to blend technical brilliance with profound emotional depth has ensured his lasting legacy in the world of music. Students and enthusiasts can gain a deeper appreciation of his style by exploring these exemplary works.

