

Anna Gower was a secondary music teacher and head of music for 18 years. She now works as a freelance consultant for Trinity College London, Musical Futures International and with various music education hubs and organisations in the UK and overseas.

by Anna Gower

INTRODUCTION

Over the summer holidays, students often have the opportunity to hear, play and access summer musical activities. Whether that involves going to a festival, listening to music on the streets, hearing music at a local event or going to a concert or summer activity camp, they don't always think to mention it when they get back to school in September. More importantly, they don't always connect it with what they do in their classroom music lessons or exams courses at school.

However, if students are about to start their KS3 music experience from primary school, are moving from KS3 into GCSE, or from GCSE to A level or are in the middle of any of these, that time across the summer can be a great opportunity to prepare them for the year ahead.

Some schools encourage teachers to set holiday work. This presents a need to find tasks for students to do that capitalise on what they might already have access to, or that can feed into the first topic they'll be learning when they get back.

But in addition to the more serious study that may be desirable, it's good to aim to build an understanding of how music is threaded through everyday life, and to make these tasks relevant, fun and engaging for students, rather than just another piece of holiday homework. It's a balance worth searching for, so that they come back to lessons in September enthusiastic and ready to get going with their music lessons for the new year!

This resource is a collection of ideas for holiday activities for students at KS3, 4 and 5. Some of these are based on the Listings Resource that can be found in the second half of the article. This is a starter list of summer activities, concerts and events from across the UK. It should support some of the activities suggested here, as well as providing a guide to some actual music taking place. It can be shared with students and parents, in case students are able to get along to hear some live music during the holidays!

Although the activities have been divided by Key Stage, they can be selected and differentiated for any age group. For that reason, I've left descriptions left open so that teachers can pin their own learning objectives to the ideas, or tweak them as required.

KS3: THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS CHALLENGE

Encouraging KS3 students to share their musical experiences with others is a great way to get to know them better, and to create an ethos of openness towards music of all styles and genres within the department. Holiday homework or student-led outcomes can result in some new display work, or even be expanded on to involve the wider school community or whole year groups.

The summer holidays challenge is a menu of things students can choose from which can then become the basis for discussions in the first few lessons back.

Activity	How to use it in class
<p>Choose one song that sums up the summer holidays for you. Write a short explanation of why you chose it.</p>	<p>In the first lesson back, ask students to tell each other what they chose and why. Pull all the songs into one playlist and label it with that class name to start to build their musical identity as a group. You could also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List the chosen songs in a display to show how many songs each class has in common. • Capture which songs are the songs of that particular summer. • Create your own school top ten. • Feature some of the student feedback about why they chose their songs. • Show examples of the stories behind the song choices made by students.
<p>Take a photo of yourself listening to music somewhere you have been in the summer holidays. Extra points if you can get a photo of yourself playing a musical instrument or singing somewhere.</p>	<p>This is already a popular summer whole-school activity led by English departments or the school library, who encourage staff and students to take a photo of themselves reading in interesting places. Gather some photos to create a display to show that wherever we go, we can take music along with us. Make a feature of any students who played an instrument or sang somewhere particularly unusual, or added a creative perspective to their photo.</p>
<p>Get together with some friends and create some music together. You might want to use the free Acapella PicPlayPost app to create some fun videos to go with a performance of a song.</p>	<p>This involves breaking a song down into parts and recreating it with the video aspects thrown in for fun. This links well to a vocal unit where students learn how music is constructed through singing in parts as well as being a creative way to present a performance. Performances can be shared during future lessons.</p>
<p>Design your own summer school. If you had one week and your dream team of experts (celebrity singers, dancers, talent show judges and so on) as teachers, how might you fill five days? Use the links to summer school activities in the listings resource to look at some examples, then start to create your own. You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a website for your summer school with a front page, profiles of staff involved and the content. • Design a poster advertising your summer school. • Write out a timetable for the week. • Do some CVs for your dream team of teachers and explain why you've chosen them. 	<p>A discussion of careers in music could grow from this piece of work. Looking at students' choice of 'experts' to teach at their summer school could open discussion about what qualifies people to teach or judge music and how people can access musical training and support outside school if they want to take their music studies further.</p>
<p>Miss your friends during the holidays? Don't worry: you can join an online music studio and write a song together. Join up with a free account to Soundtrap and get collaborating.</p>	<p>This is a great way into songwriting or singing projects. Sharing the music students have already created gets them off to a great start as they already have ideas to build on and are likely to be working in groups already. If you find students from different classes or year groups working together, they could each take the initial ideas into a songwriting project and see what a new group can do with them as they build and develop existing pieces into new ones.</p>
<p>Design a concert for younger children. Look at the links to the concerts for families in the listings resource and think about what you would include in a concert for children at your old primary school. You should come up with a theme for the concert which might be based on a book or story like the examples, come up with a list of ten pieces of music you would include, and design a poster to advertise it.</p>	<p>On their return to school, ask students to share their themes and choices. Settle on one as a class and together come up with a definitive list of ten pieces of music, making a display of the work produced. This could link to an instruments of the orchestra topic, or elements of music, if you want to give students a theme to work to rather than offer them a choice at the start.</p>

KS4: LEARN FROM THE REAL WORLD

At KS4, broadening understanding of the context of different pieces of music, how and why they're composed and performed, and becoming familiar with a wider range of musical styles and genres is crucial. Students will need to become more independent with creating and performing music, and with planning and putting on their own musical events and productions.

Holiday tasks could encourage students to think about composing their own music, taking some time to practise on an instrument or experimenting with music technology. Reading up on and listening to music from the various areas of study can mean that students turn up with some content to build on to get their GCSE studies moving from the very start of the term.

But a growing awareness of how to access music locally, and how to learn from the music all around them is also a useful exercise. It would be great for all students to be able to go to a performance over the holidays (and an easy homework task to set), but that's not going to be possible for everyone. So the following activities are based on the Listings Resource below, and are designed to support students to engage with music that's happening in the real world, as well as exploring the additional learning needed for their exams courses and producing some work to share at the start of the new school year.

- Look through the concert listings and make a list of all the different musical ensembles that are playing (eg orchestra, jazz trio, vocal ensemble, etc).
- Choose your top five events from these and any other listings that you can find, and write a short explanation about why you would like to attend them and what you might expect to hear.
- Create a playlist of ten pieces of music from the performances below. Write a one-sentence explanation of each piece and a paragraph to justify your choices.
- Watch or listen to (live or on TV/radio/online) one performance listed below in the BBC Proms section, and write a review of the performance to include a description of the type of ensemble playing, the genre of the music and at least one positive comment about the performance.
- Write a letter to your local MP to ask for national music performances to be more accessible to everyone. You might choose to justify this because of the cost of the events, where they are located, a lack of information about what is happening, a lack of events for your age group, or a lack of relevant content – maybe the music on offer doesn't appeal to you. If not, why not?
- Research music performances taking place near where you live. These could be concerts or free events happening across the summer. Design a poster advertising one event and if you can, go along to it as well.
- Design your own festival line-up. Explain your choice of artists and how that fits with a theme that you've chosen for your festival. Research the different music festivals taking place over the summer holidays and list the different genres of music that can be heard in them.
- Design a free music event to be held in your local town aimed to attract people who want to take GCSE music. Think about how you might use some of the areas of study to get people interested in hearing and knowing more about different kinds of music. You might also want to show how important performing and composing can be in getting a qualification in music by offering masterclasses or showcases as part of your event.

You can ask students to come up with their own ideas for their class 'bucket list'. They can challenge each other to have ticked off the most from the list by the time they come back in September. Or make it into a team effort and see how many each class can tick off between them.

The musical 'bucket list'

How many of the following can your students tick off over the summer?

- Hear some live music played outside.
- Write and record a song.
- Compose a new melody for your instrument.
- Go backstage at a concert or gig.
- Listen to one new piece of music per week and keep a log to share with others when you get back.
- Perform a piece of music to friends or family.
- Recommend a new piece of music to someone, and listen to something new that has been suggested to you.
- Read a biography of a classical composer or musician.
- Watch a film about music.
- Learn to play a new musical instrument.
- Create a piece of music using an app or online music studio.
- Play some music with a group of friends.

EVENT LISTINGS RESOURCE

How to use this resource

FIND EVENTS IN YOUR LOCAL AREA

There's a wealth of organisations offering performances and events across the summer, particularly at major venues in big cities across the UK. Some of these have been collated below.

Access to these isn't always possible for all students, but there are often concerts taking place locally. A great summer-term task for a one-off lesson, cover lesson or transition day is to encourage students to research events taking place locally. Alternatively, if they are going away on holiday, find something musical happening where they will be when they will be there.

You can also approach your local music hub, who might be aware of local venues that have events taking place during the holidays, or contact churches and community groups that often host performances through the summer.

If you have a local arts venue, be sure to check for a travelling performance or special summer festivals taking place there. Websites like Skiddle or Art UK have a search function for arts events near you, or if students are venturing further afield, *Time Out* has listings for major cities across the world including London.

GET PARENTS INVOLVED

If you have a parent newsletter or blog, share some links to local music events and activities. Some organisations may be willing to offer reduced tickets in return for some free publicity, or even be looking to make links with local schools. If your KS3 or 4 students try any of the tasks above, share examples of reviews and outcomes with parents to encourage families to be aware of musical opportunities that exist outside of school and in local communities.

CONNECT WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

If you have links with your feeder primary schools, sharing some suggestions for musical events taking place is a good way to start to get your future KS3 cohort ready to join you in Year 7. Be aware that there are costs attached to many of the following larger-scale events, but organisations that offer more local performances may have options to attend for free, or at least be prepared to negotiate cheap rates for local primary and secondary schools.

Also worth sharing with primary colleagues is the BBC Ten Pieces website. It has a wealth of additional video and interactive content that can be accessible to students to watch and enjoy at home. BBC Bitesize for KS2 has some great content designed to support learning the elements of music, often one of the first topics studied in Year 7, a great way to get a head start on what they will need to know when they arrive.

WATCH MUSIC ON TV

When attending a performance just isn't possible, there's still the possibility of engaging with televised or broadcast events. This could mean that students who aren't able to attend in person can still access the content. The best place to find some televised performances (or related catch-up channels) is the BBC Proms listings and the Glastonbury Festival. All BBC Proms concerts are broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and Glastonbury is covered by BBC 6 Music and BBC Introducing Music.

The BBC web pages linked to events also contain additional information and links to other related BBC content. They are a great place for students to go to find out more about various events and things happening in the music world. There's also the BBC Teach website, which offers plenty more content to explore for ideas for lesson plans and musical activities.

This version of the resource is for 2019 listings, but you can keep it current by adding a lesson plan to your stocks of cover work where students research and update the most recent listings to add to it. It can also be broadened to include events happening during the Christmas and Easter holidays.

ENCOURAGE KS5 STUDENTS TO GET INVOLVED

Some of the listings are mapped to A level set works, so let them know when these are happening or when they will be broadcast, and get them listening to as much music as possible during the summer holidays.

SHARE WITH STAFF

Share the list (and any local listings you find) with staff who might like to attend a music event over the summer to enhance their wellbeing, but who might not quite know where to start looking for something to go to!

The resource itself

NATIONAL PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

Most of the following suggested concert listings are suitable for anyone who wants to go along, and there's a real mix of events taking place across the UK. Being able to attend will, of course, depend on location and budget, and this is by no means an exhaustive list. It's designed to be a snapshot of the types of things that are available, and a resource that can be used by students in ways other than just to find a concert or performance to go to. It's organised into sections so that local events can be added to it as you and students find them.

CONCERT LISTINGS FOR FAMILIES, KS2 (FOR FEEDER PRIMARIES) AND KS3

- **The CBeebies Prom, London** (21 July): this concert also features a new BBC Ten Pieces Trailblazers commission by legendary film composer Hans Zimmer, which imagines how the Earth appears as seen from the Moon.
- **The Relaxed Prom, London** (6 August): suitable for children and adults with autism, sensory and communication impairments and learning disabilities, as well as individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, blind and partially sighted.
- **The Lost Words Prom, London** (25 August) celebrates the rich musical landscape of nature in a concert inspired by the bestselling book *The Lost Words*, which revives disappearing words that describe the natural world. This is a great introduction to programme music, and to bringing literature and words to life through music.

THE PROMS: GCSE AND A LEVEL STUDENTS START HERE

A level music requires a wealth of listening around the set works, as students are expected to know and recognise music from a range of musical styles and genres and to go deeper into pieces related to prescribed set works.

One of the largest annual concert series is the Proms, which this year runs from 19 July to 14 September 2019, with events broadcast live and available online. Start by browsing the full listings, then guide students to related listening. Alternatively, start with the list below which has been linked to set works for A level to help students prioritise which might be useful for them.

For GCSE students, becoming familiar with the different ensembles and types of music that can be heard at the BBC Proms is a good way to get a head start before they hear some of the pieces they'll be studying as part of their course. Although the following are linked specifically to set works for A level, there's a mix of orchestral music, jazz, film music and opera to get them familiar with different genres and ensembles.

Event Title	Area of Study/Set work
Stravinsky's <i>The Rite of Spring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set work: Edexcel AoS6 New Directions Eduqas AoS E: Into the 20th Century OCR AoS6: Innovations in Music 1900 to the present day
A Homage to Nina Simone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCR AoS2: Popular song – blues, jazz, swing and big band AQA AoS 5: Jazz Edexcel AoS4: Popular Music and Jazz Eduqas AoS D: Jazz
The Sound of Space: Sci-Fi Film Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edexcel AoS3: Music for Film AQA AoS3: Music for Media
Berlioz's <i>Symphonie fantastique</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set work: Edexcel AoS2 Instrumental Music
Mozart's <i>The Magic Flute</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set work: Edexcel AoS1 Vocal Music
Mozart, Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links throughout various boards' specifications to Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and the concerto
Schumann and Beethoven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links throughout various boards' specifications to development of the symphony, programme music, Beethoven and Schumann
Prokofiev and Rachmaninov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links throughout various boards' specifications to the concerto, the symphony, Prokofiev and Rachmaninov
Beethoven, Clara Schumann and Shostakovich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set work: Edexcel AoS2 Instrumental Music (Clara Schumann Piano Trio) Links throughout various boards' specifications to the symphony, Beethoven, Shostakovich and the piano concerto

SNAPSHOT OF CONCERTS AND EVENTS TAKING PLACE DURING SUMMER 2019

Related task: add to this list with events taking place in your local area. If there aren't any, come up with your own and write a plan for how, when and where you might stage it! Think about what attracts people to come along to events. Is it the musical content, the artists or bands, the location, or other factors?

- Aldeburgh Festival, Suffolk
- Folk East, Suffolk
- National Children's Orchestra summer concerts
- Birmingham Symphony Hall: performances of jazz, blues, classical music and more.
- Southbank Centre's festival series
- The Wigmore Hall's study programme includes talks, presentations, masterclasses and concerts.
- Cavatina Chamber Music Trust runs concerts across the country free for audience members aged eight to 25.
- Website Bachtrack lists more than 30,000 events each year in classical concerts, opera and dance.
- London's Grand Union Orchestra is a pioneer in cross-cultural music making in the UK.

SUMMER SCHOOLS

Related task: design your own summer school based on the models below.

Many organisations offer summer courses, summer schools and summer camps for music. Again, those mentioned below are a snapshot of the kinds of things which are available. As before, most of these events cost to attend, although some organisations have bursaries available.

- St Vincent's School, Liverpool is running a summer camp for pupils with visual impairments, covering sports, music, art, ICT and more.
- Trinity Laban Summer School hosts a five-day music theatre course and a three-day young musicians' summer course.

- Grand Union Youth Orchestra summer school.
- Royal Shakespeare Company Student Insight sessions.

FREE EVENTS

Related task: plan, design and create an advertising campaign for a festival to be held in your local area. Think about local businesses that might be prepared to sponsor your event, and come up with fundraising ideas to ensure that yours could be a free event open to all.

Just a few of the free events running across the summer:

- Bandstand on the beach, Aldburgh, Suffolk.
- Oldham Summer Music Festival.
- Southbank Centre family events.