STUDYING MUSIC AT OXFORD

May I wish you many congratulations on meeting the conditions of your offer and achieving a place at St Peter’s. I’m very much looking forward to seeing you all on your arrival in Oxford in October.

The main purpose of this letter is to offer some guidance to prepare you for your first year of study in Oxford. Over the summer you will receive from the Faculty of Music a list of suggested reading and listening which will help you to approach your studies. In addition, I provide below some further reading and listening tasks for you to complete.

Throughout your time at Oxford you will receive extensive reading lists for the various course modules you pursue. It is important to note that you should not attempt to purchase all of the books on these lists. Oxford is overflowing with excellent libraries, and you will be able to find most of what you need either in the well-stocked library at St Peter’s, in the library of the Faculty of Music, or amidst the world-famous resources of the Bodleian Library. That said, you may find it useful to possess a good musical dictionary, for which you might do no better than the single-volume New Harvard Dictionary of Music. Once you start your course in October, you will have a much better idea of which texts or scores you might wish to consult most frequently during your studies, and so I suggest that you do not make any major book purchases until then.

Should you wish to purchase scores or music books during your time in Oxford, there are a number of excellent second-hand shops, including Oxfam charity bookshops in Turl Street and on St Giles, and ‘Antiques on the High’ on the High Street (an excellent selection of musicology books and scores). In addition, you will be able to buy many second-hand course texts online on sites such as Abebooks. Blackwell’s bookshop on Broad Street also has a second-hand section to which Finalists often sell books at the end of their degrees.

Your studies at Oxford will require you to read, but also to listen. There is no substitute for engaging directly with a musical score. An excellent resource for locating pdf files of scores is the repository of the International Music Score Library Project (www.imslp.org). Listening to as wide a range of music as is possible should be the foundation of your studies. With this in mind, I provide below a helpful list of suggested works with which you might wish to become a little familiar over the summer in advance of your arrival in Oxford:

Some chant repertoire, for example in recordings by the monks from Heiligenstift
Guillaume de Machaut, Messe de Nostre Dame
Josquin des Prez, Missa l’homme armé super voces musicales
Byrd, Cantiones sacrae
Palestrina, *Missa Papae Marcelli*
Monteverdi, *Vespers* (1610); *Orfeo*
Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas*
J. S. Bach, *Mass in B minor, Matthäus Passion*
Handel, *Guilio Caesere*

Haydn, representative examples of the *London* symphonies (Nos 93–104).
Mozart, *Le Nozze di Figaro, or Don Giovanni*
Mozart, Symphonies nos. 39, 40 and 41
Beethoven, any Symphony but especially Nos. 3, op.55, No 5, op. 67, and No 9, op. 125;
Any of the late String Quartets
Schubert, *Die schöne Müllerin*
Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*
Brahms, any of the four symphonies
Bruckner, *Symphony no 7*
Elgar, *Enigma Variations*
Sibelius, *Symphony no 5 or 7*
Stravinsky, *Le Sacre du Printemps; Symphony of Psalms*
Berg, Violin Concerto, *Wozzeck*
Boulez, *Le Marteau sans maître*

Additionally, you should of course take advantage of opportunities for engaging with music via radio and TV broadcasts, and in live performance. The summer presents an excellent opportunity for you to widen your knowledge of repertoire via the BBC Promenade Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall (available in person, on the radio, or via BBC Four and iPlayer).

**Vacation Work**

Whilst I hope that you will take some time for relaxation over the summer, I recommend that you also carry out some introductory study in preparation for your studies at Oxford, as detailed below:

1. **General Reading**

   Get hold of a cheap copy of J. P. E. Harper Scott & Jim Samson (Ed.), *An Introduction to Music Studies* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009). Read chapters 1 and 2, and at least two other chapters which particularly interest you. As you read, think about the specific questions listed at the end of each chapter. The topics and questions explored in this book are good preparation for a number of the modules you will take in the first year of your music degree.

2. **Analytical Assignment**

   Get hold of a recording and score of Haydn’s String Quartet in D minor Op. 42 (either purchase a cheap score or access a pdf via [www.imslp.org](http://www.imslp.org)). Study and analyse the third movement (Adagio Cantabile) of the work. You may wish to consider the following aspects in particular: overall form and structure of the movement; tonality; harmonic progression; texture and distribution of material between the voices. Please ensure that you study the work at length and that you make detailed notes for yourself. We will discuss this piece during one of your first tutorials, and so it is vital that you come prepared to talk about your findings and ideas about the piece.

I can be contacted by email ([rachel.moore@music.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.moore@music.ox.ac.uk)) from September. Please let me know if you have any trouble getting hold of any of the resources mentioned above.
In the meantime, I hope that you have an enjoyable vacation and I look forward to meeting you soon.

With best wishes,

[Signature]

Rachel Moore