



U6 History (OCR) - Music for the Stage

REVISION GUIDE

Henry Purcell, *Dido and Aeneas*, Z. 626 (1689)
and court masque and theatre music in England.

“Musical interpretation of dramatic libretto (both sung and spoken) through melodic, harmonic and structural means, and the rôle of the accompaniment.”

1. Prescribed repertoire: Purcell – *Dido & Aeneas*

The more you know of the opera, the more examples you will have to draw on in exam questions. You must be thoroughly familiar with Purcell's style of writing and the techniques he uses.

- Revise your notes on the historical background, etc., of the opera.
- Listen through to the complete opera (in one sitting), with your score, and with your analysis notes. Sound files are available on the Public Drive (which, remember, is available from home via UppNet), or you can use the Naxos Music Library (the usual username/password (USchMM) will work at home or at school.
- Using your notes, handouts, essays, etc., make a list of compositional techniques and good examples of each, for example:

Device	Example
Phrase length extension by repetition	“they triumph, they triumph” - final line of 'When monarchs unite'
<i>etc.</i>	

- You should aim to know at least two scenes really well. 'Ah, Belinda' is particularly good as it contains examples of lots of Purcell's common techniques. The final scene - Dido's lament and the final chorus - is also a very good one to choose (particularly to illustrate points about harmony and chromaticism!). Make a summary sheet for each of your chosen two 'focus' scenes.
- Make sure you know the key structure of the opera, and how Purcell uses different keys for different circumstances. This is an important part of the analysis, and a valuable mark winner!



2. Related repertoire: Handel – Acis & Galatea

Again, start by revising the historical background of this opera. Then, choose two scenes to learn well. I would suggest:

- a) The opening (i.e., Sinfonia – Oh the pleasures – Ye verdant plains – Hush, ye pretty warbling quire)
- b) Wretched Lovers

Listen to your two chosen 'focus' scenes. Some clips are on the Public Drive; the whole work is on the Naxos Music Library.

As before, using your notes, handouts, essays, etc., make a summary sheet for each scene. Make sure you include a list of examples of the compositional devices Handel uses, and a note down whether this is similar or different to the way Purcell writes.

3. Related repertoire: Blow – Venus & Adonis

Use a similar strategy – start by revising the historical background of this opera, then choose two scenes to learn well. I would suggest any two of:

- a) The opening (i.e., Sinfonia and Prologue)
- b) The 'Adonis will not hunt today' scene (towards the end of Act I)
- c) Act III

Listen to your two chosen 'focus' scenes. Some clips are on the Public Drive; the whole work is on the Naxos Music Library (but in a rather unpleasant, old fashioned recording – if you are at home, I would suggest you use the one on YouTube (user: Lullyste) instead!).

As before, using your notes, handouts, essays, etc., make a summary sheet for each of your two chosen 'focus' scenes. Make sure you include a list of examples of the composition devices Blow uses, and a note how whether this is similar or different to the way Purcell writes.

And if it all gets too much, just remember the men you have to blame for all of this:

