

Dear Music Fresher,

Congratulations on making it through interviews and meeting your grades – a very warm welcome to Pembroke! I'm Ben, music student here at Pembroke, about to enter my second year. All you have to do now before your first term begins is prepare for a whirlwind of eight intense and stimulating weeks as a Cambridge student!

As you probably already know, the first year of the music tripos at Cambridge is very broad, designed to introduce you to diverse aspects of the discipline. Expect the work to be challenging but in the most rewarding way possible! Adapting to the new demands of essay writing in particular for the history and analysis papers is an eye opening experience and will help you consider music in so many fascinating contexts. In general, a lot of the first year course encourages you to widen your understanding of music, mainly in a historical sense, but also partly in terms of the philosophy/aesthetics of music; personally I found it really exciting having many of my preconceived ideas about music challenged, or in some cases, turned completely upside down.

You may have heard that there is no week at Cambridge dedicated purely to fresher's events. It's not as soul-destroying as it sounds, though; the first three or four days of partying before lectures kick off are super fun and exhausting. Fresher's events not only happen within Pembroke, there are also some faculty-organised events which ensure that you get to meet the other music students in your year from different colleges. In your first week, you can expect to have meetings with both your director of studies (DOS), Sam Barrett and your tutor, who oversees your wellbeing while at Pembroke. I'd really recommend getting yourself a diary/planner upon arrival if you don't already have one; keeping up to date with the seemingly endless barrage of emails you receive during the first few weeks, as well as organising DoS/tutor meetings and supervisions etc., can be quite a challenge!

In terms of your lecture schedule, you can expect to have at least one lecture a day, which are almost always held in the mornings. Each lecture series is tailored towards preparing you for one of the exams held in Easter term. Among these are two history of music papers, one focusing on Medieval history and another concentrating on Beethoven and the epoch of Romanticism. You can also expect to receive weekly lectures covering aspects of tonal skills, analysis and musicology. The musicology paper also includes an opportunity to present either a recital, composition or extended essay. Each lecture is complemented by a supervision, which is a discussion, either in small groups or individually, of the content covered in each lecture, with a specialist academic in that field. The majority of the work you will receive will be in preparation for these supervisions, which are a unique

aspect of learning at Cambridge. Your DOS may have already sent you a list of suggested reading material in preparation for your first term which will really help with the transition into thinking in the critical and informed way that the work at Cambridge demands. Don't try to cover everything before October though; it's important to get some relaxation in over the summer before the intensity of your first term begins!

I'm sure you'll love your first term as a Pembroke muso. The best piece of advice that I can give is to make sure that you immerse yourself in the limitless musical opportunities offered both within Pembroke (college choir and recital series concerts, for example) and on university level, including the wonderful array of ensembles/ recital opportunities and awards offered to talented musicians.

I have attempted to explain what you can expect from your first term as a music fresher, although it is difficult to put the sheer madness of Michaelmas term into words! If you have any questions at all about the music tripos or just life at Pembroke/Cambridge in general, please do email me (bts30) and I'll do my best to answer your question.

Congratulations again and I look forward to meeting you in October!

See you soon,

Ben