

**KAREN FOLEY:** The ArtsHub was an online interactive event. And you're about to watch a session from that. But I wanted to explain to you how it all worked.

You're about to see the video stream of the studio. But our audience participated online through chat and through interactive widgets. And those ideas were fed through into the studio from the social media desk. Of course, because you're watching it on catch up, you won't be able to do those activities. But I do hope that you enjoy the discussion that follows.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hi, and welcome back to the ArtsHub. Well, in this session, I am joined by Robert Samuels, who I'm going to introduce you to in just a moment. And we're going to be talking about A244, which is a music module. And we have a clavichord in the studio. And we're going to be talking about how we study music at the Open University. So I'm really looking forward to that.

But before we do that, I just wanted to catch up on a few bits involved because this is a live interactive event. Whilst it's about us in the studio, it's mostly about you at home. I just wanted to touch base with the social media desk and see what's been happening.

[DING]

**HJ:** Oh, I think that's our notification ping, isn't it, I think. This is for our inbox as well. So that must mean-- I hope some of you have been sending us your selfies and pictures. We always love those.

**RACHEL:** Yay, we've got some things for the board.

**HJ:** Ooh! Oh, we got a little bird house someone sent us. We really like that. Thanks, guys.

**RACHEL:** A housewarming present.

**HJ:** Ah-- I'm not too sure why, though.

**RACHEL:** Ah, Twitter.

**HJ:** Oh, OK. I think someone's hinting. So remember you can tweet us as well. I think that's very good. Well done. But where are they tweeting us at? What are we using?

**RACHEL:** Uh, there's a hashtag, #artshub16. So yeah, get tweeting, definitely. We want to see your pictures, your selfies, and your comments.

**HJ:** Oh, I don't know how many we got in here. Oop, we got a couple this morning. Let's have a look. So I think--

**RACHEL:** Did you get a newspaper while he was there?

**HJ:** [LAUGHS]. Not today. Always late, that paperboy.

We've got a picture that's coming from Mark Steel, but it's in the Chewbacca mask. That must be for our religion session because we always like to include *Star Wars* in that somehow, don't we? Whether or not *Star Wars* can be religious somehow or is Jediism really a religion? We'll find out in that session, won't we? But I love that mask.

**RACHEL:** So we've got selfies to go on the board. And it looks like we've got study buddies. Wow, Sammy sent this picture in. It's a Spaniel. Spaniel sorry, guys. It's a Cocker Springer mix that looks like a red setter, to be fair. Beautiful, absolutely beautiful.

**HJ:** Looks like me after a study session.

**RACHEL:** Even with the glasses.

**HJ:** Worn out. [LAUGHS].

**RACHEL:** Oh, it's adorable. So yeah, make sure you are sending us your selfies. Obviously you have our hashtag. And we have our little--

**HJ:** You can tweet us.

**RACHEL:** Is this a hotel we're staying in? Is that what it is?

**HJ:** Yeah, it's very small.

**RACHEL:** So hashtag #artshub16. Or don't forget to email us also at studenthub@open.ac.uk.

**HJ:** Yes.

**RACHEL:** And we'll get those on the board.

**HJ:** We want to hear from you.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Lovely. Thank you very much. And thank you for sending in your selfies. That's great.

Right, we've got a lot to get through. I'd like to welcome you, Robert Samuels, or as your friends call you, Bob. And I think we're on that sort of level now, aren't we?

**ROBERT** I hope so.

**SAMUELS:**

**KAREN FOLEY:** So thank you for joining us. Now, you're a senior lecturer in the music department. And your claim to fame is-- well, you taught music for over 20 years. But you have been involved in every module that's been produced by the music department at the Open University during that time.

**ROBERT** Yes, they've kept me busy.

**SAMUELS:**

**KAREN FOLEY:** [LAUGHING]. So tell me, I mean, we've got lots of students who maybe don't know about music. I mean, these are art students here, primarily, so they might have more of an idea. But how do we study music? How do we learn music at The Open University?

**ROBERT** Well, a lot of people are quite surprised to know The Open University teaches music because  
**SAMUELS:** you think of music as being something that's hard to do at a distance. But it's something that we've done since The Open University opened, so for 40 years. And the important thing to say is that we don't teach you how to play an instrument. But we teach you all that you need to know about music.

The module we've got at second level, which is called Inside Music, is about going inside the process of writing, the process of listening, the process of playing and enjoying music. And it is for all students. It doesn't matter whether you consider yourself to be a musician. It doesn't matter whether or not you can play music. It doesn't actually even matter whether you can read music or not at the beginning because we have some free and open access materials which teach you basic music theory from first principles. So if you wanted to study A224 in--

**KAREN FOLEY:** Oh, sorry, did I say that wrong?

**ROBERT** Yes, you got it wrong earlier. If you want to study A224 starting this year in October, then

**SAMUELS:** between now and then, you could look at the open access materials on OpenLearn, which is called An Introduction to the Theory of Music. And that will give you all you need to know in terms of how you talk about music, the basic terms and ideas to get you started off at level two with us.

We are entirely open. We're the only university that teaches music from the beginning. That's the part of being open to everybody and open in every respect.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Well, I imagine that there are a lot of people, even if they aren't interested in studying music, might like to refresh some of their skills with that open educational resource, which is always a great thing to be able to tap into.

**ROBERT**  
**SAMUELS:** Yes, we got two of those. We've got the stuff you can access at any time, which is on OpenLearn. That's called Introduction to Music Theory. If you look for "music theory," you'll be able to find it.

We've also got a MOOC, which is on how to read music, reading musical scores. And that's starting in the middle of July. And that's on FutureLearn. So those are entirely free and open to everybody.

And we find students come to us to study music quite often as a combination with other things in their degree. Music's one of those subjects which lots of people enjoy in one way or another, listening or playing. And it combines very well with the other subjects as well. So we have people-- our students come from all walks of life as well, teachers, but doctors, lawyers-- everything.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Very varied. So Inside Music, then-- what happens in this module? How do we learn? What's in it?

**ROBERT**  
**SAMUELS:** OK, well it's our second level module. And it's called Inside Music. It's trying to introduce you to the basic ideas about how music works, going inside the experience of music. So looking at the sort of basic building blocks which apply to music no matter what sort of music you're talking about, basic things like rhythm, like melody, like how music works through time, and then also harmony and how musical pieces are put together.

There's a huge variety of different music in this. On one page, you might get an example from a Beethoven symphony. On the very next page, you might be with a '70s funk band. And on the page after that, you might be with modern Cuban dance music. It really is as varied as that

because we're trying to look at the things which are common to music wherever it's produced and whoever listens and plays it.

As the module goes on, there's more of a concentration on what I suppose is most familiar to most of our students, which is our Western repertoire. And there's a bit of an emphasis on the classical repertoire because that takes the most different ideas to study it. But it's a very broad course. And you study all sorts of different things within that.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So a lot of students who are studying this-- you mentioned that there are a range of people who may or may not be doing something to do with music. They might just add it to a general arts degree. But what would you say to those students who maybe have something in mind?

So you've mentioned that there are lots of various disciplines that they would look at. What if somebody is really into classical music, and then all of a sudden, they're looking at various things? How would that enhance their experience and understanding of music by, say, looking at some of the other various forms that you mentioned?

**ROBERT SAMUELS:** Well, one of the things that-- no matter how much or how little you know about music, you're going to find out something new by studying any of our modules. And so if you are an enthusiastic music player or if you're an enthusiastic listener to music, then you'll go deeper into the music that you love. But you'll also find out something about music you don't know anything about.

So when we look at rhythm, for instance-- you start off looking at rhythm in what might be familiar contexts in Western music. But then you look at rhythm in Indian music, which is unfamiliar to most of our students. That broadens out your understanding of how the whole thing goes.

There is not a single culture, a single society, as far as we know, that has existed in the history of the world which has not had its own music. Music is a universal human experience. It's a universal way in which human beings express themselves and communicate with each other. And we try to look at some of those big ideas and then some of the really specific things which are about the music heritage in specific cultural contexts as well.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Wonderful. So we've talked about the sort of things that we're doing. But how is it assessed? What are students doing? They're doing some theory in their assessment? How does it work?

**ROBERT** Yeah, that's right. Obviously music is often thought of as being a very subjective and personal  
**SAMUELS:** thing.

**KAREN FOLEY:** One moment, I see it in theory. And then my teacher always tells me that, categorically--

**ROBERT** Well, it's a combination of things which are definitely right or wrong and also that kind of stuff  
**SAMUELS:** which is much harder to express but which is the most important thing about music, those things which-- it's very hard to capture in words and so on.

In terms of assessment, when you're studying with us, some of it is learning some of the basic ideas of theory and how you talk about music, how you express the way you think and feel about it. And at the end of our module, instead of doing the exam, what you lead up to is doing a setting of some words as a song. So you learn a little bit about writing music. And you show us what you've learned by setting just four or five lines of text as a song with a piano accompaniment. So that's the kind of way we're leading up to.

So you learn a bit about the theory, a little bit about history, different musical forms. And also, you have a go at writing some music yourself. For some of our students, that's what they've been aching to do for years and years. And for others, it's a very new experience. But the module is there to lead everybody through that kind of experimenting with their own ideas as well.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Wonderful, now, you've brought us a clavichord.

**ROBERT** Yes, I have my friend here.

**SAMUELS:**

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yes, and I wanted to talk with you about this, obviously, because it's in the studio but also because you'd mentioned that you're a music teacher and you're actually going to play something. And I wondered if you could, before we start talking about the clavichord, touch on this idea around how important it is to play or teach music and really where those things lie. Is this all about being good musicians, being performance level? Or is it just about understanding and enjoying music? What's your take on it all?

**ROBERT** Well, the way we teach, the emphasis is always on understanding and enjoying music. Now, I  
**SAMUELS:** teach music not because I'm a good performer because I'm not. In fact, when I was a teenager, I realised I was never going to be as good a performer as those I enjoyed listening to. And so my way of performing in life is by teaching. And I teach music because I love it, not

because I could ever earn my living by playing it. In fact, the exact opposite. And I'm going to play this instrument in a minute.

**KAREN FOLEY:** You're not a very good, like, er, You're not bigging yourself up.

**ROBERT**  
**SAMUELS:** No, that's right. But the thing is, I love music. I'm passionate about listening to it. I'm passionate about understanding it.

The thing that really excites me is understanding more about how music works and how it has the effect on people that it does. It's a very important part of most of our lives. Memories and your experience in life are often associated with music one way or another. So that's why we brought the clavichord in.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Actually, tell us about this clavichord. I'd never actually seen one before, obviously very similar to a piano but a very different layout.

**ROBERT**  
**SAMUELS:** Well, effectively, it's an early piano. These were found for 300 or 400 years. This would be-- something like this would be what people had as a keyboard instrument at home. It's the predecessor, I suppose, of modern synthesisers and electronic keyboards, which many more people have room for in their house than they do a piano. And as you can see, this is not as big as a piano. That's one of the reasons we could get it into the studio today easily enough.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And it's very quiet, which is ideal if you have small children.

**ROBERT**  
**SAMUELS:** It's very quiet. That's right. So the piece I'm going to play is by Bach. And some of you may know, Bach had many children throughout his life. Most of them were musicians. And several of them grew up to be celebrated composers as well. I think if you have eight or nine children all having to do practise in your house at the same time, then having an instrument as quiet as this must be one way of getting some peace for yourself.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Could you play us this piece? Because the context of playing this is this is something within the module, isn't it, that the students actually analyse. So would you be able to play it and then show us, I guess, some of how you might do this within the module?

**ROBERT**  
**SAMUELS:** Yeah, sure. I'm going to move here, OK?

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yes, it's fine.

**ROBERT**

**SAMUELS:**

I'll go over here. I hope that everyone can still hear and see me. The piece I'm going to play-- it's by Bach. It's called a Prelude. It is in C major. It's quite a well-known piece. It starts like this.

[MUSIC - JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, "PRELUDE IN C"]

And it goes like that all the way through. It lasts about a minute, minute and a half. And it's a series of chords-

[PLAYING CHORDS]

--which are all spread out like that. So each chord is spread out for a whole bar by Bach. And when you study it in A224, we actually go through it several different times to try to understand how the piece makes sense overall, not just each chord going to next chord but how the chords overall go. And what we discover is it starts like that.

[MUSIC - JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, "PRELUDE IN C"]

And halfway through the first bit, it goes to this.

[MUSIC - JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, "PRELUDE IN C"]

And then at the end of the first half, it goes to this.

[MUSIC - JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, "PRELUDE IN C"]

So it just goes--

[PLAYING CHORDS]

--with chords leading in between. And then at the end, this goes--

[MUSIC - JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, "PRELUDE IN C"]

And then--

[MUSIC - JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, "PRELUDE IN C"]

--to finish. And those sort of landmarks throughout the piece are the things that you learn, terms one learns how to identify when you're studying it in the module. So A224-- the theory is to do with looking at this piece several times to try to understand how the harmony makes



sense. And when you hear the whole thing, you can watch and see if you can hear--

[PLAYING CHORDS]

--and then--

[PLAYING CHORDS]

--through the first half of the piece. And then--

[PLAYING CHORDS]

--in the second half of the piece. It goes like this.

[MUSIC - JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, "PRELUDE IN C"]

[APPLAUSE]

**KAREN FOLEY:** Bravo!

[APPLAUSE]

Oh, that was wonderful. Thank you for that. Do you know, it's interesting because I've normally heard that on a piano or various other instruments. And I was thinking that the sound, with it being so quiet, you wouldn't be able to get that-- but it's very, very subtle as an instrument, isn't it? Oh, that was really-- actually really lovely and relaxing. Thank you.

**ROBERT**

**SAMUELS:**

Yes, ideal for first thing in the morning. Isn't it? Yes, I mean, Bach didn't actually say what the piece should be played on. He just said for a keyboard instrument. So you're quite able to play it on anything you like. It's quite all right to play it on a modern piano or even on an organ if you wanted to.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Brilliant. Thank you for that. And then of course, you've explained how students would deconstruct that.

And I wanted to wrap up the session-- because unfortunately, as always happens, we've run out of time-- about talking about the future because you've got some exciting projects, haven't you?

**ROBERT**

**SAMUELS:**

Oh, absolutely. We want to teach more and more music. In fact, at our third level, we have our third level module, which we hope our students who do a second level module will go on to. But also this year, starting a new venture, we've gone into partnership with a music conservatoire in London called Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music, or Conservatoire of Music and Dance, actually. And they're producing a module for us called a Certificate in the Practise of Music Making.

Now, this is for students who make music or take up making music with other people in order to study the module. And it counts for 60 points at level three. You go to Trinity, and you study, just like with an Open University course, at a distance. It doesn't matter where you live in the country.

And then you have a residential week around about Easter time. So you go down to London for a residential course for a week as part of the study. And that counts as 60 points at level three.

So if you do level two music, you can now do 120 points at level three in music which hasn't been true at the Open University before. So we're very excited about this. And we hope that it'll encourage many more students to follow that journey through the music that we offer as part of the Humanities with Music degree.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Wonderful. Bob Samuels. Thank you so much for filling us in on that. It's been really inspiring, really useful to know more about how we're actually teaching music. It sounds very exciting. And I can see why a lot of students would be attracted to this. So thank you very much for that.

Right, well, that ends our session. So if do have any questions, don't forget you can email us, [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk). And we'll endeavour to answer any of those for you. But I hope that that's inspired you at home and explained a little bit about how we teach music at the Open University.

We're next going to be doing religions. And we're going to have another audio only break. So we'll be playing something. The screen will be static. And then I'll be joined by three wonderful colleagues to talk about religious studies and how we do that.

So grab a cup of tea. I hope you're enjoying it. Don't forget to send us your tweets. Send us any ideas you've got for the caption competition. Send us a picture of you or your study buddy and let us know how you're doing. It's really nice to see how you all are at home because of

course, this is just as much about you as it is about what's going on in the studio here as well.  
So we'll see you very shortly for our session on religious studies. Bye for now.

[MUSIC PLAYING]