

SCHEME OF WORK 2: What processes for evaluating pupil work can be adopted to give constructive feedback and encourage peer review?

LESSON 5

TOPIC AND PURPOSE	OBJECTIVE	ENGAGEMENT	STICK-ABILITY
Creating background for backbone melody.	To consider what makes a good background. To compose background material in small groups to accompany atonal melodies.	Compare the backgrounds in the photograph of Thelonius Monk to Durer's <i>Melancholia 1</i> .	A good background stays in the background, a good solo melody is salient. There are many options in creating a background beyond chords.

DIFFERENTIATION

Embedding:

Learners will use their knowledge of backgrounds, riffs, drones and pulses and, with support or prompting, contribute to the realisation.

Enhancing:

Most learners will go beyond this and use their knowledge to contribute to the small-group compositions with creative ideas to help realise the tone row melodies.

Extending:

Some learners will take a leading role in the realisation process, giving clear suggestions to other ensemble members, and creating a background that is functional but also distinctive. Very able composers may explore more adventurous ideas, such as shadow melodies and punctuation.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To explore the idea of musical background, use this knowledge to realise Backbone (tone row) melodies in small groups.

ACTIVITY ONE:

As a class, make a list of the sorts of musical backgrounds you can think of.

Focus on generic rather than specific ideas – eg riffs generally rather than the *Smoke on the Water* riff.

Separate out anything with too many harmonic changes – “chord sequence”, “descending bass line” ground bass, changing riffs that imply a changing harmony all require improvisation techniques which are beyond the scope of this project.

STARTER

Look at the photograph of Thelonius Monk
<http://www.talkovichguitars.com/a-dvice-from-thelonious-monk.html>, and Durer’s *Melancholia 1*. Compare the backgrounds. Which allows the subject to stay firmly in the foreground? How do the backgrounds give us information about the subject?

Commentary on Activity One:

Examples are: drones, riffs, drum beats, bass riffs, textures, static chords, pulses. You might also add in punctuation (eg stabbed chords), and “shadow” melodies – counter melodies that echo phrases from the backbone melody.

In this context chords implying vertical harmony are tricky to work with, as vertical harmony tends to dictate pace and direction – it drives the improvisation rather than fleshing out what is there.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment focused on improvement of compositions including; critical conversations with the teachers and in groups.

Use of specific musical terminology such as riffs, drones, and pulses.

Class discussion exploring the creative processes involved in composing.

ACTIVITY TWO:

It may be helpful to quickly demonstrate each of the examples on your list. Use examples from *Blue Appropriation*, ask pupils to demonstrate (eg drone, drum pattern). Demonstrate shadow melodies by echoing the ends of phrases.

Commentary on Activity Two:

Relating back to the material in Blue Appropriation leads to greater integrity in the finished piece.

ACTIVITY THREE:

Working in small groups (4-6 pupils, mixed ensembles): Choose 1 tone-row melody to be the Backbone. Create a background for it using your instruments and/or percussion, striving to maintain the drama of the scenario.

Extension: Will your background carry 2 backbone melodies? Or would it sound better to change the backing in order to move on to a second melody? How could you join the two sections together, so that they sound like 1 piece of music?

Commentary on Activity Three:

Add riffs, drones, punctuation, drum patterns, shadow melodies. Groups work at different paces, and the extension is designed for a faster-working group. Even If they don't complete this activity it will have been worth thinking about it.

ACTIVITY FOUR:

Perform to each other and evaluate. Can you hear the melodies clearly? Do they sustain the drama? Is there a progression from less dramatic to more dramatic? Playful to dark?

Commentary on activity four:

Hearing the melodies is a test of functionality. The “progression” is a way of evaluating without judging, and may give you some ideas for ordering the group pieces into a larger class piece (as sections added to Blue Appropriation).

ACTIVITY FIVE:

Does anything need to change?

Take 15 mins to make changes. Make a note of your composition so that you can come back to it next week.

It may be helpful to record your work as well as making notes.

Commentary on activity five:

Players with many levels of experience resist writing down what they did, thinking that they’ll remember at the next rehearsal – they often don’t, so best practice is to write it down anyway. You may want to write instructions, musical pitches, letter names, who to listen to, or anything that helps retain the work.

Extension activity.

Have more confident students work in pairs to play their backbone melodies simultaneously to create a contrapuntal duet. Keep free of pulse, and start one at a time. Listen for gaps/spaces in each others melodies to place active parts of music. You may find the melodies need more time.

Commentary on extension activity:

The melodies work well together because they have the same starting point – they are musically related.

RESOURCES:

Percussion instruments.

Pupils’ own instruments.

Copies of Blue Appropriation.

Learners’ own notes

Tone Row melodies.

Recording device and playback facility