

SCHEME OF WORK 4: How do we introduce music to young people that they don't already know and make it relevant to their learning with reference to both musical and extra-musical contexts?

LESSON 1

TOPIC AND PURPOSE

The Shock of the New!

This session introduces the project and the piece 'Worm Gear (Gadget III)' by composer Fraser Trainer to the group.

It explores how you can encounter music through imagery and metaphor.

OBJECTIVE

To explore the musical language of a new piece of music: Worm Gear (Gadget III) by Fraser Trainer.

Gadget: A mechanical device or tool designed to make life or a machine function in a more satisfactory way!

STICK-ABILITY

The learners shall develop new musical terminology and explore new musical worlds.

ENGAGEMENT

In order to prepare for active listening the learners shall be involved in class discussions about; the music, it's character, make-up and context.

Alongside this they shall also explore its building blocks with reference to other music and their own musical worlds.

DIFFERENTIATION

Embedding: learners will listen and respond to a new musical experience and begin to gain an understanding of the compositional processes involved in making a composition.

Enhancing: some will go further than this and understand some of the processes involved in making such a composition and respond using musical terminology.

Extending: a few may go well beyond this and respond personally to the composition, understanding the conceptual ideas behind the piece and the musical process involved in making it.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

How to assimilate new experiences into their own musical schemas.

How to listen to and construct the architecture of a new piece.

Gain an insight into the compositional process.

Learn to become a composer.

How music involves the whole person – the intellect, the emotion and the body to think conceptually.

STARTER

Introduce the Project:

Talk briefly about the project and the work you are about to begin. Outline the themes and what you hope it will achieve in terms of the students leaning and experience.

Each learner in the group introduces themselves as a musician saying what instrument(s) they play and what music they like to listen to. Ask for names of artists / bands / composers – be specific not just a list of genres!

ASSESSMENT

Via questioning, an assessment of the learners musical and creative knowledge will be gained.

These questions can be constructed through group discussion, peer-to-peer conversations or through written responses.

ACTIVITY ONE:

Invite people from the group to talk about gadgets, amazing machines or technology that they use, perhaps it's had an impact on their life or peoples lives in general or it's broken down causing frustration etc.

Commentary on Activity One:

Musical instruments are incredible machines that were once brand new technology...

ACTIVITY TWO:

Warming Up:

Try some call & response rhythms: the leader claps a rhythm or performs a body percussion rhythm and the group repeat it back.

Try it round the circle, taking it turns to invent the lead rhythm before everyone responds. Talk about rhythm and ensemble and how to “get it together”...

Count up how many people are in the room. Ask the group to count up to that number. However, there is no prescribed order, each person may only say one number each and if two people speak at the same time you start all over again!

Encourage each student to place their number within the time span created with concentration on the moment of placing (‘existing in the moment’). Discourage pre-planning, impulsiveness and seizing control by always being the first or last.

Commentary on Activity Two:

Starting points to talk about:

‘rhythm comes from the body’; ‘physicalising the beat’; ‘getting it right on the money’; ‘letting the beat get into your body’; ‘making your rhythm go right down into the floor’; ‘feeling the upbeat together’; ‘think of rhythm being like a tune’; ‘‘imagine you’re leading the whole group’.

Try this a few times. It won’t work at first but gradually the group will find they get better and get further. The key is to listen and really enjoy the space between the numbers. The more space, the easier it is!

This is a great exercise for learning that the success of the group as a whole depends on the contribution of every individual!

ACTIVITY THREE:

Listen to Worm Gear (Gadget III) together.

Try to create a readiness to listen as a thinking, active audience with an atmosphere of curiosity. Asking the questions below immediately before listening might help this.

Prepare to listen '... to a piece you have never heard before, in a style you have never heard before. It will be like finding your way through an uncharted forest. You will need to find some landmarks or you'll get lost. In this case they are aural landmarks'.

Ask the group the questions about 'Worm Gear'. They can be answers to the questions in the commentary, general comments or even further questions about understanding the music or how it's made or constructed. It might be useful to make an archive of some of the responses so we can measure how responses change over the course of the project.

Worm Gear: A worm gear (or worm drive) is a simple machine that meshes a worm (or screw) with a worm wheel to change the direction and or magnitude of a force. The tuning mechanism of a double bass uses the worm gear principle.

Commentary on Activity Three:

What instruments are you hearing?

What kind of musical material are they playing?

How many are playing (many-few)?

Is the music fast-slow, high-low, loud-quiet?

How does it start-end? Are there different sections-emotions-atmospheres?

What character does the music have?

What are the textures?

Do you hear patterns, sequences or punctuations?

How does the music change (gradually-suddenly)?

What do you notice? What jumps out at you?

Can you make a mental map of how the music evolves?'

HOMEWORK:

Research worm gears and their mechanical properties.

RESOURCES:

Link to recording of Worm Gear by Fraser Trainer:
<https://soundcloud.com/fraser-trainer/04-gadget-3-worm-gear>

Device for listening to music;

Learners' own instruments;

Classroom instruments.