

## **SCHEME OF WORK 1: What pedagogic strategies are there for creative learning in music?**

### **LESSON 3**

#### **TOPIC AND PURPOSE**

The development of creative learning processes.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To introduce the process of artistically directed composition.

#### **ENGAGEMENT**

This is a way to get the group focused, committed, and communicative. One of the key aims is to develop group awareness and ability to focus on whole group development.

#### **STICK-ABILITY**

Learners will develop the ability to listen to and take account of different views. They form collaborative relationships, resolving issues to reach agreed outcomes.

## DIFFERENTIATION

**Embedding:** Most pupils will have developed further their reflective skills through offering constructive and critical feedback. They will begin to act and work like an artistic director.

**Enhancing:** Some will go further than this and have more refined composing skills. They will take on more of a lead when directing the compositions and work towards a leadership role in the group.

**Extending:** A few may go well beyond this and work like a composer and artistic director within their groups.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To develop skills and ideas like a composer and direct collaborative pieces like an artistic director.

## ACTIVITY ONE

Begin the lesson by reviewing and reflecting on the homework. Listen to the learners' riffs and offer feedback via class and group discussions.

A discussion should concern:

- the music
- things that are good

## STARTER

All in a circle:

- A clap is passed around,
- A "hey" is passed around
- A clap one way, a "hey" the other

Extension:

With eyes closed,  
In small groups,

## *Commentary on Activity One:*

Some pupils are likely to have fragile material and fragile performances. Encourage the sharing of ideas and the development of a trusting classroom.

Look for the nuggets of brilliance within this!

## ASSESSMENT

Pupils will be assessed on their collaborative skills and the development of their composing and artistic director roles.

Observe the groups and offer learners opportunities to develop their skills through discussion and reflective feedback verbally and through written direction.

Use the lesson objectives to offer opportunities for pupils to self-assess work.

## ACTIVITY TWO

Take one loop and add layers. Orchestrate, develop, tweak, refine, rehearse and perform.

Choose a strong player and a strong riff to start.

Ask another player to add something. You may want to:

(a) say exactly what you want them to play;

(b) give them a general instruction, such as ...play a drone, or add some textural sound, or play a pulse, or add a riff;

(c) or you may leave it free for the player.

Work a little with that part until it feels good.

Now add a third part and a fourth.

Consider doubling parts, or dividing parts.

Consider roles: foreground, background, supporting, soloistic.

Consider the nature of material: pulse, drones, sustaining sounds, looping, free, punctuating.

Refine, tweak, change or develop anything.

## *Commentary on Activity Two:*

### *THIS IS THE HEART OF THE COMPOSITION PROJECT*

*The aim here is to show how it is possible, as a composing director, to add simple parts to a loop to create a chamber piece.*

*You need to be very clear with your choices and be prepared to work with the various ideas that you add.*

*If something isn't working, change it. Don't be afraid to drop an idea if it doesn't work. It is important to show that ideas sometimes don't work, and that it can be a good practice to drop material.*

*Be prepared to experiment, and to try something even if you're not certain about it. Work with it. See if it has legs. Develop-Tweak-Refine.*

*And always reserve the right to ditch it.*

### ACTIVITY THREE

**listen:** *Oh Superman* by Laurie Anderson

**write:** what you hear & what you think.

#### **discuss**

One of the aims is to get the group to understand the basic fabric of the music:

- it is formed from layering simple clear elements.
- it is a form of melody and accompaniment
- there's a dynamic contrast between sung and spoken text, and other elements

The basic principle is:  
One static part about which other parts move.

#### *Commentary on Activity Three:*

*The power of the music comes from the stark sound world and effortlessly understated emotional content. It is an example of "less is more".*

#### **ACTIVITY FOUR**

In groups of 5-7 take one loop. Add layers, orchestrate, refine, tweak, develop and rehearse.

It maybe useful to insist on certain elements:  
a secondary loop,  
a sustaining part,  
a spoken or sung part,  
a pulse.

Each group will stay together for the rest of the project.

#### ***Commentary on Activity Four:***

The groups should be mixed skill, mixed resource ensembles.

As the groups are working, guide them and help them make a few decisions. Groups can get stuck just playing a riff incessantly without making any decisions. Intervene as appropriate.

#### **ACTIVITY FIVE**

Performance and composition process.

For each performance, a discussion should concern:  
the music  
the performance  
the leadership  
things that are good  
how things could be improved

#### ***Commentary on Activity Five:***

## **HOMWORK**

Each learner receives a commission, to compose for their group. Basic ideas should be prepared and they will be the artistic director.

The commission must be specifically tailored to each individual learner and should appropriately challenge each learner's skill, experience and artistic interests. The commission should take the form of a simple statement outlining the key characteristics the composition should take and, if appropriate, an extra-musical or expressive instruction. The aim of the commission is to inspire each learner to create something personal and to focus them in a specific artistic and technical direction. The commissions should be written on paper and handed to each pupil in a sealed envelope.

Each learner will take on the role of artistic director of their group to develop their piece. For the next class, they need to compose their starting material - a riff, or some chords, or a groove, or a melody etc. They will then have time to try their material and to develop it.

They should notate their ideas.

It is important to get the commissions right. They need to be achievable for each learner, but also to be creatively challenging. They should be open enough to give the learners genuine freedom and the potential to express something personal.

Examples of commissions are:

- Compose a 3 pitch riff for guitar and a 5 pitch melody for flute. It should be slow and soulful;
- begin with a progression of 4 dark chords;
- a 3/4 drum groove and 4 chords;
- only the notes C sharp, F, F sharp, A; Driving;
- begin with a droning guitar chord.

It can be useful to think of a fundamental layer that can then be fleshed out and developed with the group.

## **RESOURCES**

Classroom instruments;

Learners' own instruments;

Recording and listening device.