

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 3

TOPIC AND PURPOSE

After two sessions of bringing the unfamiliar into the classroom, this session takes a step towards a much more familiar and recognisable musical world for the students. It also focuses on the music's inner workings and encourages the learners to think inside the musical processes as part of their composing practice. This lesson is less to do with learning "about" the music of others but real and personal responses.

OBJECTIVE

Learners shall create musical material within a closed structure.

To explore refining, edit and develop material.

To encourage learners to make a connection with the musical or compositional aspirations of the group through the development of creative learning approaches.

ENGAGEMENT

To work together as a large group, and be able to listen and make space for each other.

STICK-ABILITY

To demonstrate that the class group can be a band or orchestra regardless of instrumental make-up.

DIFFERENTIATION

Embedding:

Learners will understand the importance of editing and refining ideas to begin to reach conclusions. They will also develop their knowledge of creative ways to transform ideas and take risks.

Enhancing: Some will go further than this and be confident in taking creative risks when developing their compositions. They will also respond personally to the task.

Extending: A few may go well beyond this and edit and refine their work with confidence. They will refine their ideas through creative processes, such as, risk taking, experimentation, and exploration. They will be confident in their ideas offering a more personalised response.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To work collaboratively.

That editing and refining are significant and important steps in the process.

A way of expanding cells of material as well as how to transform an idea into something new.

To trust and gain confidence in their perceptions and feelings about the music.

STARTER

Make sure everyone has an instrument and get the group seated in the room in a circle formation or one where it's possible for each learner to see everyone else in the room.

ASSESSMENT

Learners will question and reflect on their creative approaches. Through group and peer to peer discussion they will begin to recognise how to proceed and develop their compositions, as well as assess their musical responses.

ACTIVITY ONE

Listen, Imagine, Play.

Introduce the following pitches and get everyone to play them on their instruments: A B C D Eb F G. This is a pool of pitches to use to invent melodies and riffs. Along with a common pulse, it's the glue to bind everything together. It is taken from the opening section of Worm Gear.

Get everyone to play up and down the mode together.

Commentary on Activity One:

Make sure everyone has an instrument and get the group seated in the room in a circle formation or one where it's possible for each student to see everyone else in the room.

Don't worry if not everyone in the group knows all the notes – it can be good for some members of the group to just concentrate on using 2 or 3 pitches.

ACTIVITY ONE CONTINUED

Set a pulse or a repeating rhythm going and ask each member of the group to invent a short musical cell that relates to the pulse.

Whoever is playing the pulse should invite each member of the group to join the music one by one.

One short idea is enough: don't worry about being particularly melodic. Each learner can work out their own way of repeating their idea so that patterns of different lengths emerge and overlap.

Gradually fix and set the patterns to make a structure, taking care of how they fit together or how they sit side by side. Look for spaces in the music to fill.

Through the repetition of the ideas in different permutations make phrases; extend patterns, build musical textures from ideas that feel or sound connected and find smaller groups within the ensemble that work together.

Commentary on Activity One:

Encourage learners to take time to listen carefully to the music that's already playing and to think to themselves "what does the music need?"

Above all, don't be afraid to refine and edit what is being created. Encourage connections between members of the group and their material.

ACTIVITY TWO

Transformation and Development
Get the group to think of an instruction that will change the character of the phrases.

For example: although the pulse may stay the same, the individual phrases could gradually slow down and the notes within the cell gradually get longer and longer.

Try playing this section from the beginning with the pulse keeper deciding whether to cue the transformation instruction to individuals, or small groups within the ensemble or even to everyone at the same time. Decide on a signal for the transformation instruction so it can't be confused with any others.

Try a few different ways of doing this; with different leaders; different instructions and see what work best.

Record this section of music and any follow-up material that has been created in response to the ideas / questions above.

Commentary on Activity Two:

Remember how we did this with the machines music in Session 2. It should be a simple instruction to give to everyone in the group that will affect the shape, length, contour, texture and or structure of each of the repeating patterns.

This instruction causes the music to expand, feel like it's slowing down, although the pulse is the same, with a change of emphasis from rhythm to pitch and texture as elongated sounds overlap and reach a point of stillness.

Which ones have the biggest and most transformative effect on the music?

Where does it end up?

How far away from the original pulse and rhythm can you get?

How do you deal with the density of the textures?

All playing together or just one person?

ACTIVITY THREE

Evaluation:

Have a discussion with the learners about the music they made:

What was it made from?

How was it made?

What did they think of it?

What skills do they need to employ to make it successful?

What title would you give to the piece we invented?

How did it feel to be part of the composing/performing process in today's session?

What did you learn from it?

What style of music do you think the piece was in and why do you think that?

Commentary on Activity Three:

RESOURCES

Classroom instruments;
Learners' own instruments;
Recording and listening device.

HOMEWORK

Encourage the learners to expand their learning outside the classroom in their own groups and bands.