

Pedagogic Strategies to Nurture Creativity

Part 1:
Introduction to
Composing

Part 2:
Composing
Projects

Part 3:
Song Writing

Part 4:
Improvising

Junior Cycle Music Specification – Rationale

'Music can provide an environment for the student where they are safe to explore, experiment and be allowed to take creative risks. As a creative endeavour, music can facilitate the development of imaginative and exploratory experiences, where individuality and personality are provided with the opportunity to grow and be given a voice. Through movement, sound, symbol and image, engaging with music can transform people's creative ideas into expressive works that communicate feelings, meanings and interpretations to a wider audience.'

(Music Specification p.4-5)

1. Introduction to Composing

Strategy 1: Rhythmic Ostinati using Body Percussion Motifs

- Teach a basic rhythmic ostinato
- Students collaboratively create a body percussion motif to represent this ostinato
- Students then notate their body percussion motif on an A3 page using visual symbols they feel represent each beat
- Divide the class into groups, each group creates one other body percussion motif and designs visual symbols to represent their body percussion motif
- Each group rotates through the visual symbols created by the other groups and reads, interprets and performs each of the body percussion motifs at sight
- Class collaboratively places all the body percussion motifs in a specific order to illustrate a structure for one large body percussion composition
- The class then reads, interprets, rehearses, performs and records the composition using the full graphic score

Strategy 2: Using Digital Learning Technologies - Soundtrap

- Explore how sounds are layered through engaging with the 'One Man Choir' sample
- Investigate the influence of the processing effects used in the 'One Man Choir' sample
- Experiment through dragging and dropping parts of the individual tracks of the 'Dubstep' sample to create their own new adaptation of this sample

2. Composing Projects

Strategy 1: Using a stimulus – Silent Movie

- Research how music and sound effects are used in certain scenes in films
- Pick a silent film that has accompanying music to analyse with your students
- Create a worksheet that students will complete to support their analysis of this music

- Pick a film to which students can create their own track (www.openculture.com)
- Select a clip from the film for students to base their composition on
- Divide the class into groups and allocate each group a film clip
- Give students the choice and opportunity to create their composition using instruments, found sounds, digital learning technologies
- Students will then create a graphic notation of the composition for their film clip
- Students rehearse and perform their composition to the film clip

3. Song Writing

Strategy 1: Rhythm & Blues songs – for example ‘Gangsta’s Paradise’ by Coolio

- Underline stresses
- Perform / Speak
- Rewrite lyrics to suit school context
- Practise using syllables

Strategy 2: Song Writing

- Agree a topical issue
- Build key ideas for your song
- Brainstorm key words and compile lyrics
- Decide on chord progression (3 – 4 chords)
- Find the melody in your lyrics
- Arrange the structure for your song

Strategy 3: Theme ‘Let’s Celebrate’ using song type - Hymn

- Listen to and explore one or more hymns that could be performed at a special occasion
- Choose one hymn to rehearse and perform as a class
- Use the learning of this performance to analyse common compositional techniques e.g., structure, chords, melodic shape
- Use the learning of this performance to analyse the different types of accompaniment styles and instruments e.g., Guitars/ukulele/keyboards
- Research and discuss lyrics across many sources, e.g., hymnals, internet, live performances
- Select set of lyrics that will match your celebration
- Create three chords to represent the mood of these lyrics
- Explore the stresses and harmonic rhythm of these lyrics using these three chords
- Compose a melody to match these lyrics and chords

4. Improvisation

Strategy 1: Building the skills of improvising

Improvisation involves creatively using musical instruments and your listening skills to create and perform music spontaneously or without prior preparation

- Provide an accompaniment of Em – Em/D – Em-C# - Em/C played in semibreves as a backing loop
- Create a melody in semibreves to match this accompaniment
- Build on this melody by creating a ‘new’ melody in minims to match this accompaniment
- Build on this melody by creating a ‘new’ melody in crotchets to match this accompaniment
- Build on this melody by adding quavers to the melody
- Build on this melody by adding rests to the melody

Further Ideas

From our elective Webinar April 2019

‘Creating and Exploring Junior Cycle Music’

