Year 7 Music
New Directions 1: Experimental Music

Students are learning about the experimental music movement of the 20th-Century and how divergent thinking changed the notion of what music is. Up to now students will have explored the MAD TSHIRT elements of melody, articulation, harmony, tempo and rhythm through predominantly performance-based tasks.. This project completes the set by delving into texture, structure, dynamics and instrumentation (sonority) through the medium of a computer-based music technology composition project.

Previous topic:

Stepping Up 2: Ukulele and Keyboard

Next topic:

Music Through Time 1: Music for Events

Core knowledge/skills/concepts

From Year 7 to Year 13 we constantly embed the core elements of music: Melody, Articulation, Dynamics, Tempo, Structure, Harmony, Instrumentation, Rhythm and Texture (MAD TSHIRT). This vocabulary, alongside a growing understanding of music notation, allows students to articulate opinions about music and how it was made. Giving them the language to talk about music and equipping them with skills to create it is at the centre of everything we do. Every lesson involves practical music making as either a performer or composer on a range of instruments and in diverse contexts. Students will practice these skills more deeply as their musical learning journey continues through school.

Music Technology skills
• Slicing audio
• Interpreting audio waveforms
• Navigating a Digital Audio Workstation
• Adding effects to audio
• Copying, pasting, looping and layering audio tracks

Experimental Music
• What is the difference between music and sound?
• 20th-Century approaches to composition
• The cultural/historical/geographical context in which this music was created
• Links to the visual arts
• Divergent thinking in the creation of art music
• How music can be created without melody or harmony as a foundation
• The importance of structure, texture and sonority in the creation of a composition

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Essential vocabulary

- MAD TSHIRT (Melody, Articulation, Dynamics, Tempo, Structure, Harmony, Instrumentation, Rhythm, Texture)
- DAW (Digital Audio Workstation), layering, looping, slicing, automation, panning, export, bounce, reverb, gain, distortion, chorus, phaser, pitch shifting, reverse

Threshold concepts

Students will be building on the IT skills gained in other subjects and applying them in a musical context. This is a foundation unit designed to equip students with the necessary competency and understanding of music technology to access later schemes in our curriculum.

Opportunities for reading

In music lessons students will read contextual information about the music they are creating from slides and handouts. They will gain increasing confidence with the technical vocabulary used to talk about music, including musical directions in English, Italian and German. Equally important is frequent exposure to musical notation in its myriad guises. This helps to unlock different types of comprehension, creates connections between sound and symbol, and offers access to the world of written music.

Musical notation

DAW timeline/arrange window, audio waveforms, automation curves, audio cells, modified stave notation (Berio, Cage, Cardew etc.)

How and when will the core learning be assessed?

Students will be assessed on their holistic development as a musician over time with projects designed to showcase ever-maturing musical understanding. Our assessments are linked to the National Curriculum's core pillars of Performing, Composing and Appraising in equal measure. These are formative in nature and are used to give students verbal feedback in the moment. Students track their progress against our core competencies and will reflect on their work in lessons, with recordings of classwork documented and revisited at regular intervals for self/peer review.

Links to other topics/subjects

Visual arts / architecture / poetry etc.