

Golden Concept: Composition

Purpose:

There are several common reasons why composition is often emphasised in music education. Creativity and self-expression allow students to express their creativity and individuality through music composition. The process of composition involves critical thinking and problem solving, requiring students to make decisions about melody, harmony and the structure of musical elements. Through composition, students gain a deeper understanding of the musical elements and explore how they interact to contribute to the overall impact of a music composition. Composition provides a practical application of for music theory concepts, allowing students to apply their theoretical knowledge which reinforces their learning to their own work. Composing music also is a way for students to explore different musical cultures and exposes them to the inclusivity and diversity music offers. Composition supports students' ability to use a variety of technology and develops skills using tools and software. Composition uses skills such as discipline, perseverance, organisation, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively.

Assessment:

Assessment in music education is crucial for evaluating students' progress, understanding their strengths and areas for improvement, and informing instructional decisions. Assessment methods in music can encompass a variety of approaches, including formative and summative assessments. Performance assessments evaluate students' ability to present a composition to a group. Peer Assessment and Feedback also enables students to give positive praise and constructive criticism in a safe space to develop confidence and self-awareness. Aural and listening assessments support students to compose original music and consider creativity and use of the musical elements to take knowledge that has already been taught, and apply it to other mediums in the music curriculum. Assessing original compositions and improvisations evaluates the students' ability to create music spontaneously and creatively, with adherence to composition principles. Music theory-based assessments assess the students' knowledge of the basic music theory that underpins all aspects of composition. Reflective journals and rehearsal logs also allow the students to evaluate and assess their own work, and look for ways that can progress their compositions skills.

Cross curriculum:

Mathematics: Rhythmic Patterns: Understanding and creating rhythmic patterns in music can reinforce mathematical concepts such as counting, patterns, and fractions. Musical Notation: Reading and interpreting musical notation involves concepts like symmetry, spatial relationships, and proportions, which have mathematical connections.

English: Lyric Analysis: Studying song lyrics can enhance language skills by analysing figurative language, metaphors, and symbolism. Students can also write their own lyrics as a form of creative writing. Storytelling through Music: Composing music to convey a narrative can be linked to storytelling techniques, connecting musical expression with language arts.

Science: Physics of Sound: Understanding how sound is produced and travels involves principles of physics. Exploring concepts like pitch, frequency, and amplitude connects music with scientific principles. Instrument Construction: Building simple instruments or exploring how different instruments work can involve concepts of materials, vibrations, and acoustics.

History and Geography: Musical History: Exploring the history of music allows students to understand the cultural context of different musical styles, connecting music to historical events and societal changes. Cultural Studies: Studying music from various cultures provides insights into history, geography, and social structures of different societies.

Computing: Music Technology: Using digital tools for composition and production connects music with technology education. Students can learn about recording, editing, and producing music using software and hardware. Digital Literacy: Understanding and navigating digital platforms for accessing and sharing music align with broader digital literacy skills.

PE: Movement and Dance: Integrating music with movement activities enhances coordination and rhythm. Dance can be incorporated into music lessons, promoting physical activity and creativity.

Art & DT: Graphic Notation: Creating visual representations of musical ideas (graphic notation) connects music with visual arts. Students can use drawings and symbols to represent musical elements. Instrument Design: Designing and decorating homemade instruments or exploring the visual aspects of music performance link music with visual arts.

PSHE: Collaboration and Communication: Group music activities, such as ensemble performances or collaborative composition projects, foster teamwork, communication, and interpersonal skills. Emotional Expression: Music provides a medium for emotional expression, allowing students to explore and understand their emotions in a supportive environment.

Key Stage or stage breakdown:

Stage 1 & 2: Introduction to basic musical concepts and exploration of sound. Simple creative activities, such as creating short musical patterns or rhythms, using body percussion and simple instruments. Develop an early awareness of musical elements like rhythm, melody, and dynamics.

Stage 3 – 6: Building on foundational musical concepts and introducing more complex elements. Students start composing short melodies, experimenting with basic harmony, and exploring musical form. They use notation and simple music software. Develop a more nuanced understanding of musical elements and the ability to express ideas through composition.

Stage 7 – 9: Deepening musical understanding and exploring a wider range of musical styles and traditions. Students engage in more advanced composition tasks, including longer pieces, more sophisticated harmonic structures, and exploration of different genres. They might use technology for more complex arrangements. Enhance critical listening skills, delve into music theory, and encourage more advanced creativity in composition.

Stage 10 – 11 (BTEC Music and Sixth Form Enrichment): Preparation for more specialised study or vocational pathways. This involves composing original pieces in response to specific briefs and demonstrating a deeper understanding of compositional techniques. Students develop more advanced compositional skills, understand music within a cultural context, and prepare for further study or potential careers in music.