

Bird In A Cage: Work Shop Plans

The following document details an outline for creative musical composition workshops, aimed at children between the ages of 10 - 11. Although the workshops are specific to the *A Bird In A Cage* project many of the ideas and techniques designed to encourage young children to create their own music within a group setting are entirely transferable and could be employed within a different workshop setting.

The workshops aim to facilitate song writing as well as encouraging more generalised musical compositional skills. Furthermore it aims to inspire artistic creativity through the employment of simple graphic notation whilst emphasising the importance of working effectively in a group.

Although technology is not an absolute necessity in regards to the running of this workshop, in this instance music technology is incorporated towards the end of the session to record the music created by the pupils. If you do not wish to utilise technology in the workshops the suggested timings may require amendment. If not, the workshop would simply run half an hour / twenty minutes shorter depending on which of the two templates (Group A and Group B) you are referring to.

The Poem / Text:

The Ride to Victory

Women are strong, women are wise
Women are much more than housewives
Why do they have to just cook and clean?
Women are more than mere machines
They have dreams, they possess skill
They are believers in free will
Polish, wash-up, clean and cook
It's time to re-write that book

CHORUS

This is the fight of our lives
So gather round, mothers and wives
All our lives we've served
But freedom is deserved
Standing proud, shouting loud
This is the ride to victory

Women have minds, women have duties
Women are more than just beauties
They are full of pride and passion
And not just all about fashion

They are more than skirts and blouses
And would much rather wear the trousers
Hair style, make-up, hats and coats
It's time they got the vote

CHORUS

Women are tough, women have guts
Women are more than mums to us
Some may want to go to school
Come on world, now don't be cruel
Just because they might be mothers
Their rights should be just like their brothers
Caring, sharing, making babes
But women are not slaves

CHORUS

Specific Timings:

GROUP 1 (2 hours 30 mins) -

9:00 - 10:30

(15 minute break)

10:45 - 12:00 25 Children (Split the children into groups of 6 - 7)

Lunch 12:00 - 1:00

GROUP 2 (2 hours 5 mins) -

1:00 - 2:15

(15 minute break)

2:15 - 3:20 25 Children (Split the children into groups of 6 - 7)

Kit List For the Day (Including Recording Equipment)

- A3 sheets with poem and blank
- Fine liner pens
- Felt tip pens
- Boomwackers (two bags)
- Claves (one bag)
- Acoustic Guitar (only for reference - please use instrument of choice)
- Guitar stand
- MacBook Pro
- Focusrite Interface
- SE electronics Cardioids x2
- Firewire cable 400 - 800
- XLR cables x4

- Mic stand and boom, stereo bar (for ORTF / NOS pair)
- DT770 Headphones
- Adams A3X Monitoring Speakers (Incase play back is required)

Workshop 1

9.00 - 9.15

Set up the workshop materials. Each of the four sections of poetry to be laid out in each corner of the space (pre-prepared) along with pens. (Percussion instruments to be provided later on in the process)

Set up mini studio in the corner of the room if there is the available space / time. (Could be set up towards the end of the session)

9.15 - 9.25

All class sitting down, verbal introduction.

- Who we are.
- What we are going to be doing.
- Why we are going to be doing it.
- How? (short workshop explanation)
- We will be recording after break.

9.25

Bungalow Vocal / Rhythmic Warm Up¹

Chorus: Bungalow bung - bungalow x2 - accompanied by rhythm pattern.

Solo: My arms are high and my legs are low and this is how I bungalow (do action)

All: His arms are high, his legs are low and this is how he bungalows (all do action)

Caller Hey *Mary*, Hey *Mary* - show us how you bungalow.

9.30

Ask the teacher(s) to split the class into even groups of four (6 - 7 children within each group) and ask them to go to each corner of the room.

¹Telford & Wrekin Music., 'The VoxBox of Vocal Treasures' <<http://www.telfordculturezone.com/resources/TWM-MUSIC/Vox%20Box%20Resource%20Pack.pdf>>

9.35

Still holding full class attention, ask the pupils to read through their text in a group and out loud until they feel confident in the words and natural rhythms. Go around each group to work on individual sections and encourage the pupils to be aware of the musicality within the words. This will begin to enable the children to extract the rhythmic elements of the text later in the workshop.

9.45

(Percussion instruments to be handed out to each group once it becomes clear that they have experimented with the spoken word sufficiently)

Pupils can now start to use the percussion instruments standing / sitting in a semi circle so that they can all interact with each other. Points of rhythmic emphasis may now have been marked / circled in coloured pen on the A3 text sheets (as directed by members of staff) indicating moments where the voices and percussion could get louder or quieter.

More able / musically experienced students should be encouraged to incorporate theoretical musical language when describing dynamics. The drawing of shapes to represent the sound and structure should also be encouraged thereby providing an insight into graphic scoring and notation.

From here, help the students to create rhythmic passages only using the spoken word and percussion. Steady rhythmic passages can be constructed using the percussion instruments.

10.00

At this point - melody (singing) can be introduced into the song writing process by tackling the phrases chronologically. Identifying rhythmic similarities between individual lines of text may allow repeating rhythmic contours to inform consistency in melody construction.

Musical phrases should emerge from the text and the percussion rhythm organically but students may need a great deal of encouragement depending upon how comfortable they are when singing in front of their peers.

These melodic ideas will then need to be rehearsed, so that a structure is solidified.

Throughout this process, guitar chords may need to be used as melodic / tonal stimulus.

10.20

Sharing of ideas. Each group is to perform their song in front of the rest of the groups.

10.30

Break

10.45 - 10.55

Bungalow Vocal / Rhythmic Warm Up

Chorus: Bungalow bung - bungalow x2 - accompanied by rhythm pattern.

Solo: My arms are high and my legs are low and this is how I bungalow (do action)

All His arms are high, his legs are low and this is how he bungalows (all do action)

Caller Hey *Mary*, Hey *Mary* - show us how you bungalow.

10.55

Back into groups.

10.55 - 11.30

Whilst continuing to work on the melodic and rhythmic ideas, gradually facilitate the development of the song and the students confidence in remembering the structure. The piece will need to be prepared for performance at the end of the session. The spoken word version of the poem will also need to be revised. (For recording purposes)

Percussion instrumentation can be incorporated into the final performance or the completed song can be performed a cappella.

11.30 - 12.00

Performance / Recording session and short warm down.

For the warm down get the pupils to stand in a large circle formation. Shake limbs and body out - be crazy!

Workshop 2

GROUP 2 (2 hours 5 mins)

1:00 - 2:15

(15 minute break)

2:30 - 3:20 25 Children (Split the children into groups of 6 - 7)

1.00 - 1.15

Setting up the workshop materials. Each of the four sections of poetry to be laid out in each corner of the room (pre-prepared) along with pens. (Percussion instruments to be provided later on in the process)

Set up mini studio in the corner of the room if there is the available space / time. (Could be set up towards the end of the session)

1.15 - 1.25

All class sitting down, verbal introduction.

- Who we are.
- What we are going to be doing.
- Why we are going to be doing it.
- How? (short workshop explanation)
- We will be recording after break.

At 1.25 (or earlier if possible)

Bungalow Vocal / Rhythmic Warm Up²

Chorus: Bungalow bung - bungalow x2 - accompanied by rhythm pattern.

Solo: My arms are high and my legs are low and this is how I bungalow (do action)

All: His arms are high, his legs are low and this is how he bungalows (all do action)

Caller Hey *Mary*, Hey *Mary* - show us how you bungalow.

1.30

Ask the teacher(s) to split the class into even groups of four (6 - 7 children within each group) and ask them to go to each corner of the room.

²Telford & Wrekin Music., 'The VoxBox of Vocal Treasures' <<http://www.telfordculturezone.com/resources/TWM-MUSIC/Vox%20Box%20Resource%20Pack.pdf>>

1.35

Still holding full class attention, ask the pupils to read through their text in a group and out loud until they feel confident in the words and natural rhythms. Go around each group to work on individual sections and encourage the pupils to be aware of the musicality within the words. This will begin to enable the children to extract the rhythmic elements of the text later in the workshop.

1.45

(Percussion instruments to be handed out to each group once it becomes clear that they have experimented with the spoken word sufficiently)

Pupils can now start to use the percussion instruments standing / sitting in a semi circle so that they can all interact with each other. Points of rhythmic emphasis may now have been marked / circled in coloured pen on the A3 text sheets (as directed by members of staff) indicating moments where the voices and percussion could get louder or quieter.

More able / musically experienced students should be encouraged to incorporate theoretical musical language when describing dynamics. The drawing of shapes to represent the sound and structure should also be encouraged thereby providing an insight into graphic scoring and notation.

From here, help the students to create rhythmic passages only using the spoken word and percussion. Steady rhythmic passages can be constructed using the percussion instruments.

2.00

At this point - melody (singing) can be introduced into the song writing process by tackling the phrases chronologically. Identifying rhythmic similarities between individual lines of text may allow repeating rhythmic contours to inform consistency in melody construction.

Musical phrases should emerge from the text and the percussion rhythm organically but students may need a great deal of encouragement depending upon how comfortable they are when singing in front of their peers.

These melodic ideas will then need to be rehearsed, so that a structure is solidified.

Throughout this process, guitar chords may need to be used as melodic / tonal stimulus.

2.15

Break

2.30 - 2.35

Bungalow Vocal / Rhythmic Warm Up

Chorus: Bungalow bung - bungalow x2 - accompanied by rhythm pattern.

Solo: My arms are high and my legs are low and this is how I bungalow (do action)

All: His arms are high, his legs are low and this is how he bungalows (all do action)

Caller: Hey *Mary*, Hey *Mary* - show us how you bungalow.

2.35

Back into groups

2.35 - 3.05

Whilst continuing to work on the melodic and rhythmic ideas, gradually facilitate the development of the song and the students confidence in remembering the structure. The piece will need to be prepared for performance at the end of the session. The spoken word version of the poem will also need to be revised. (For recording purposes)

Percussion instrumentation can be incorporated into the final performance or the completed song can be performed a cappella.

3.05 - 3.20

Performance / Recording session and short warm down.

For the warm down get the pupils to stand in a large circle formation. Shake limbs and body out - be crazy!