

Senior School Choral Workshop
A Bird In A Cage

The following document details an outline for creative musical composition workshops, aimed at student between the ages of 14 - 18. Although the workshops are specific to the *A Bird In A Cage* project many of the ideas and techniques designed to encourage the students 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 advanced musical compositional skills with reference to idiom, harmonic language, compositional technique and historical context. Furthermore it aims to inspire artistic creativity through the employment of graphic notation whilst emphasising the importance of working effectively and creatively in a group.

Although technology is not an absolute necessity in regards to the running of this workshop, in this instant music technology is incorporated towards the end of the session to record the music created by the young musicians. If you do not wish to utilise technology in the workshops the suggested timings may require amendment.

Key Words Relating to the Chosen Compositional Idiom (French Impressionism of the Early 20th Century)

To be printed out for student's reference.

Impressionism	Hemiola
Imitation	Polyrhythm
Sequence	Sforzando
Drone	Binary
Pedal	Ternary
Inversions	Through composed
Modulation	Cyclic
Antiphony	Coda
Augmentation	Treble clef
Motivic development	Key signatures consisting of up to 6 sharps or flats
Rubato	
Cross-rhythms	

Work Shop Plan

Specific Work Shop Timings:

3.10 pm - 5.15 pm

Reference Scores for Printing:

John Cage - Williams Mix
Karlheinz Stockhausen - Helikopter
Gyorgy Ligeti - Artikulation
Krzysztof Penderecki

Contextual Information Surrounding Graphic Notation:

*'This is a score (192 pages) for making music on magnetic tape. Each page has two systems comprising eight lines each. These eight lines are eight tracks of tape and they are pictured full-size so that the score constitutes a pattern for the cutting of tape and its splicing. All recorded sounds are placed in six categories ... Approximately 600 recordings are necessary to make a version of this piece. The composing means were chance operations dervied from the I-Ching.'*¹

*'The only realization of this score to date was carried out by Cage himself. In spite of the assistance of Earl Brown and David Tudor, with editing and splicing the recorded tapes, completing this four-minute-long sound montage took approximately a year. Used for the premiere performance were 4 stereo tape recorders and 8 speaker.'*²

¹ Cage, J., 'Werkverzeichnis' (Edition Peters, New York 1962, page 41)

² Dieter, D., <<http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/williams-mix/>>

Workshop Outline

Introductions / Explanations - 5minutes (3.10 - 3.15)

Vocal warm up and stretches - 10 minutes (3.15 - 3.25)

Utilising the round *Oh Beautiful Spring* (Score in attachments)

Oh beautiful spring for whom do you sing with garlands of flowers,

The silver moon with soft perfume.

For cosy rests in feathered nests,

Let nature rejoice on hearing your voice your beauty is ours.

Compositional Technique Step One - Word Setting (3.25 - 3.55)

- The students are to be divided into four even groups, dividing the more musically experienced / knowledgeable students between the groups so that they will be able to assist their younger peers.
- The first step of the compositional process is to assist the students in extracting rhythmic and pitched melodic ideas and motifs from the text. Once this process is completed, melismas and other embellishments can be incorporated to aid melodic development. Use of Sibelius / hand written notation.

Compositional Technique Step Two - Use of Graphic Scoring (3.55 - 4.20)

- After being shown the graphic scores with a short explanation (Cage / Stockhausen / Ligeti / Penderecki) assist the groups in creating graphic scores (with melodic ideas / fragments in mind) which will depict an overview of the shape / structure / texture / dynamic contour / harmonic progression. (May be useful to guide the students to create an more impressionistic style score using shapes that are suggestive of sonic structures, not rigid, fixed ideas)

Compositional Technique Step Three - Bringing the Two Together (4.20 - 4.40)

- Combine the suggested harmonic / textural structures from within the graphic scores with the melodic ideas initially constructed. Notated melodic fragments can be incorporated into the graphic score as a guide if necessary.

Compositional Technique Step Four - Rehearsals (4.40 - 4.55)

- Time to rehearse / critique / amend the composed material.

Compositional Technique Step Five - Performance and Recording (4.55 - 5.15)

- Each group to perform their individual piece to the rest of the choir.