



What NEXT?

1. Introduction

Special activity:

This week we have special activity for you! You are invited to **compose** music for **musicians** from Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's **NEXT** programme. Your task is to compose music for two of them - a **duet!**



NEXT is a training programme that BCMG runs with the **Royal Birmingham Conservatoire** for music students and professional musicians looking for a career as performers of **contemporary music**.

If you would like our NEXT musicians - Maja, Raddon or Raymond to play your music, please register by sending us an email [HERE](#) by Tuesday 30 June (so we know how many to expect). Then, send us your graphic score by Tuesday 7 July. You can also tell us which two instruments/musicians you would prefer to compose for. We will try to make sure they are the ones playing your piece but can't guarantee this as we want all our NEXT musician to have a go!

Your task is to use the ideas you find on these pages to create your own graphic score for two musicians – a duet!

There are **five sections** to this resource as follows:

1. Introduction
2. **Meet the musicians:** short videos in which the three of the NEXT musicians introduce themselves and their instrument, give a little demonstration and share some musical ideas.

3. **Graphic scores:** what is a graphic score? And what to think about when making one.
4. **Conversations:** thinking about composing a duet where the musicians have a conversation.
5. **Accompaniments:** thinking about composing a duet when one musician accompanies the other.

Take a listen:

At about 5 minutes into the video below, you will hear **Maja (violin)** and **Rebecca (flute)**, two of the NEXT musicians, playing a *Duet No.4* by composer **Harrison Birtwistle**. Listen carefully here: <https://youtu.be/rNG71xFWFg4?t=300>

- Who **starts**?
- Who has the **main idea** and who is **accompanying**? Does this stay the same?
- **How** can you tell which is the main idea and which is the accompaniment?
- Who is **leading**, who is **following**?
- If you **drew** what they were playing what would your **lines** and **shapes** look like?
- When are they doing **similar** ideas when and they doing **different** ideas?

2. Meet the Musicians

You can compose for two out of three musicians. **Maja Pluta (Violin)**, **Raddon Stephenson (trombone)** and **Raymond Brien (Clarinet)**. Each of them will introduce themselves and their instrument then share **6 ideas**:

1. A **slow** melody
2. A **fast** melody
3. A long note **drone**. This might have trills, flutter tongue, tremolo or changes in dynamics.
4. A rhythmic **ostinato** - an ostinato is a repeating pattern or musical idea
5. An **interesting** sound or musical idea that their particular instrument does well
6. A second interesting sound or musical idea

As you **listen** to the videos, you might want to **draw the shapes** of the sounds that you hear. You could use these when you **compose** your **duet**.

Maja Pluta – Violin <https://youtu.be/VNksPp83Syk>

Raddon Stephen – Trombone <https://youtu.be/l4J2HAah8Os>

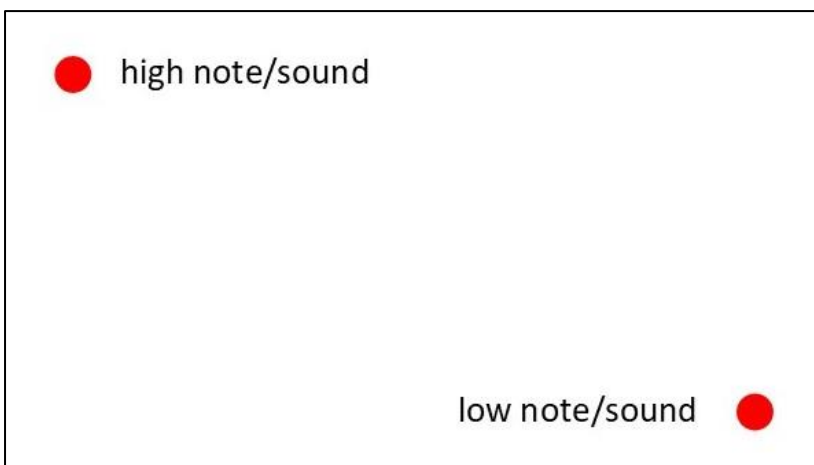
Raymond Brien – Clarinet <https://youtu.be/mS-iXetiLBM>

3. Graphic Scores

You are going to create a **graphic score** for your duet. A graphic score uses **shapes, images, lines** and **words** to tell musicians what you want them to play instead of traditional music notation. **Google** graphic scores to see lovely examples.

When you draw your graphic score, there is lots to think about. First of all, you need to know that the musicians will be reading from left to right, like reading a book. This means you lines can't go backwards like in a loop.

You also need to **think about**:

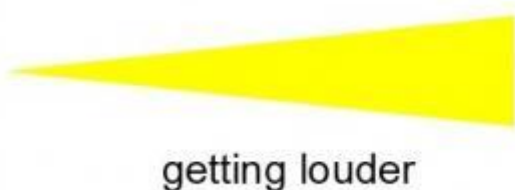
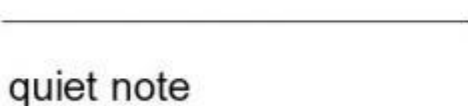


PITCH (how HIGH or LOW a note is): move from bottom to top or top to bottom of the paper to show how high or low you want a note/pitch to be.

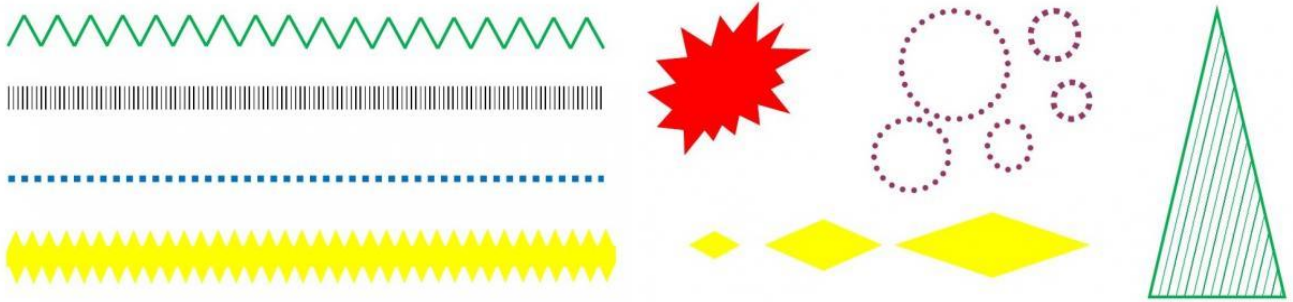
DURATION (how LONG or SHORT a sound is): makes lines and shapes longer or shorter to show how long or short you want a sound to be.



DYNAMICS (how LOUD or QUIET a sound is): make lines and shapes thicker or thinner to show how loud or quiet you want a sound to be.



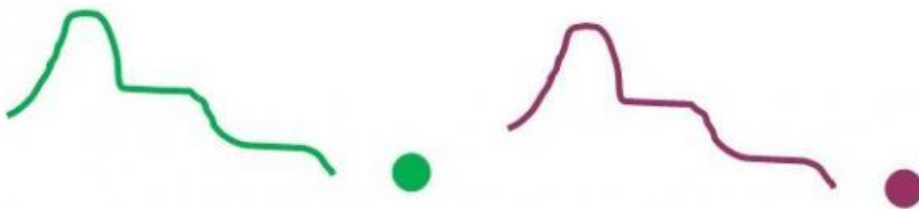
CHARACTER: change or decorate your line or shape to show the character or your sounds and melodies.



4. Conversations

One way you can think about your duet is as a **conversation** between the two musicians. Maybe you could **imagine** that each of the musicians has a particular **character**?? In a conversation, one person starts (in green) and the other replies (in purple). When they reply they could answer with:

The **same** shape/line:



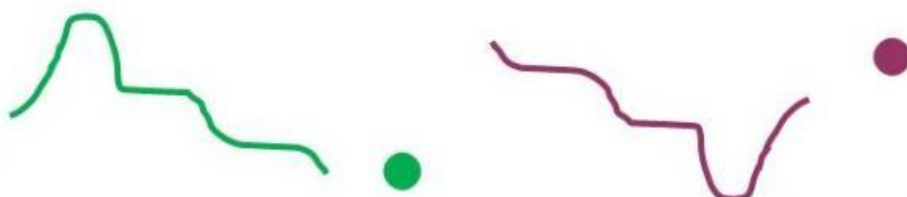
The same shape/line with something **added** to the **beginning**, **middle** or **end**.



The same shape/line but at a different **pitch** or **dynamic**:



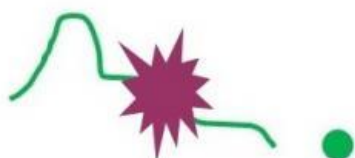
All or a bit of the idea **broken up, backwards, upside down** etc.



Something **completely different!**



And sometimes they are rudely **interrupted!**

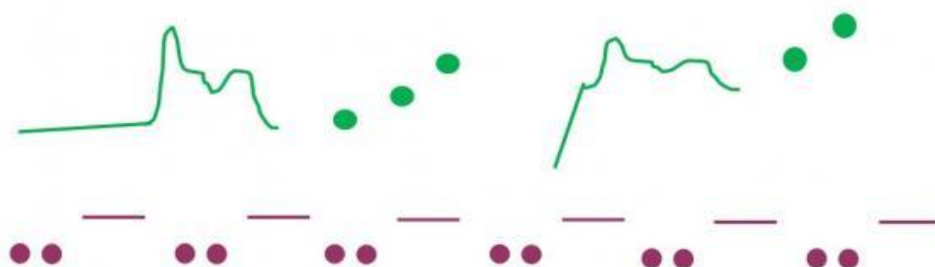


Make sure it is **clear** which bit is for which musician. You could **divide the page** in two horizontally or you could use **different colour** for each musician as I have done here.

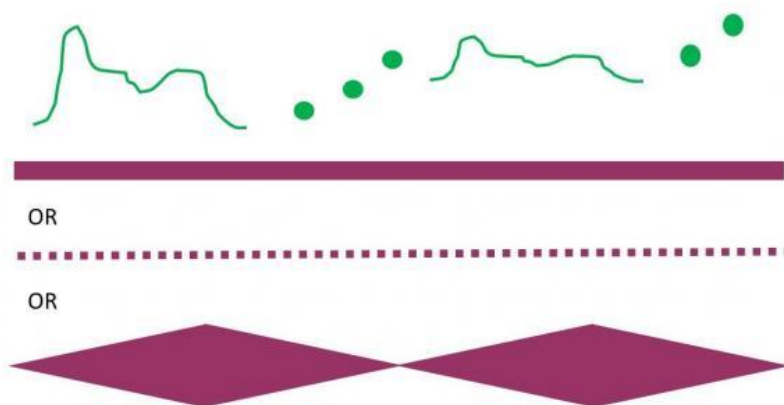
5. Accompaniments

Another way for two musicians to play together in a duet is for one musician to have a **main idea** and for the other to **accompany** them with a simpler idea. This second idea might **complement, decorate, interrupt** or give a particular **character** or **mood** to the main idea. Accompaniments could include:

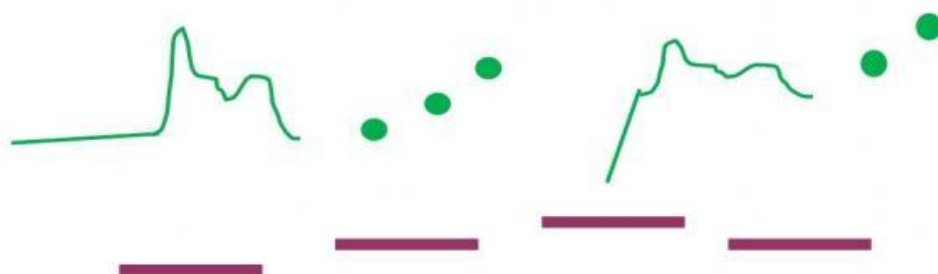
An **ostinato** (repeating pattern) underneath: this could stop and start and could also be a melody as well as a rhythm:



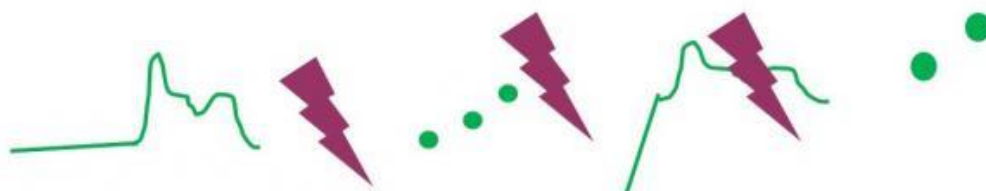
A **drone** (long note): this might change dynamics (how loud or quiet) or how it is played (trill, tremolo, flutter tongue).



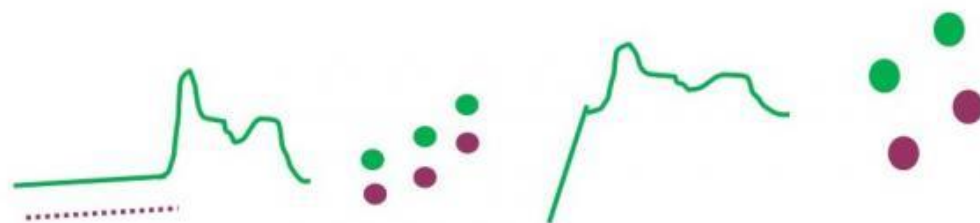
A **counter-melody** or **second idea**:



Interruptions:



Complementing and **decorating**:



Remember, you can **swap** as many times as you like which musician has the **main** idea. Again, make sure it is **clear** which bit is for which musician. You could **divide the page** in two horizontally or you could use **different colour** for each musician. I have done both here.