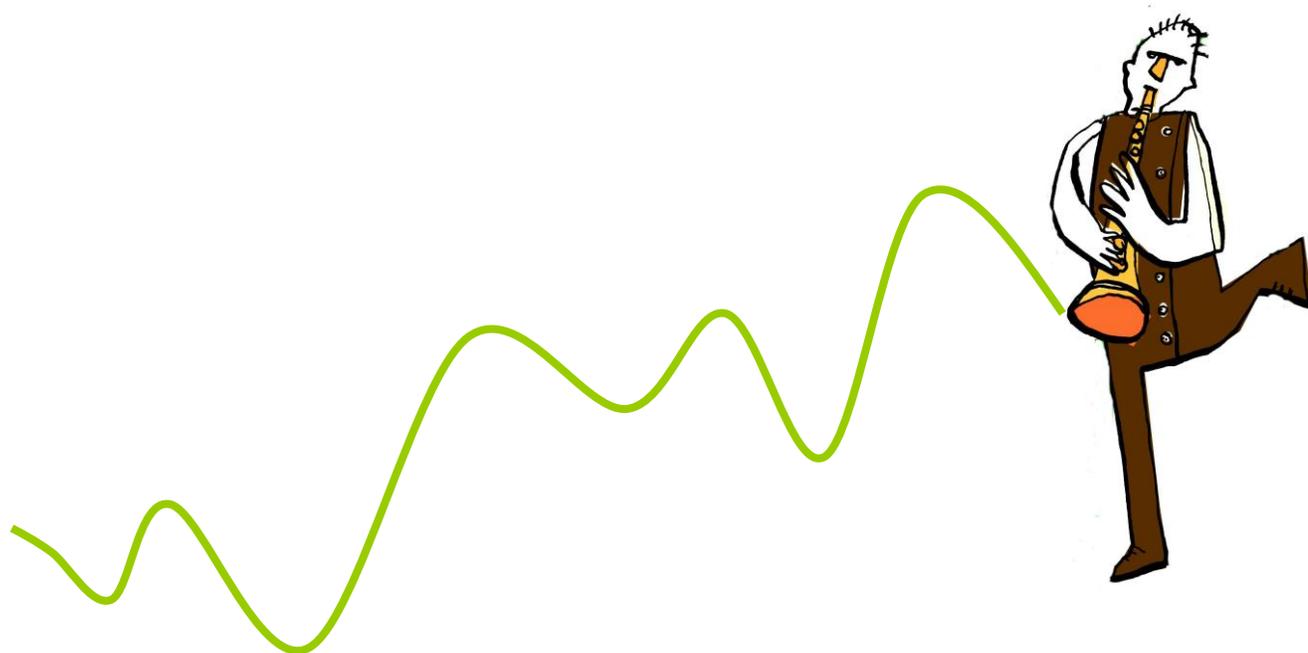


Birmingham
Contemporary
Music Group



**Schools' Concerts 2008
Resource Pack**

Introduction

On 14 January 2008 Birmingham Contemporary Music Group presented their second annual Schools' Concert at the CBSO Centre, following the huge success of last year's new initiative.

BCMG is one of the world's leading classical new music ensembles. Emerging from within the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in 1987, the Group quickly established a reputation for brilliant performances, ambitious commissions, innovative collaborations, and a vibrant learning programme. With a central commitment to composers and the presentation of new work, BCMG has premiered over 150 new works, many commissioned through its pioneering Sound Investment scheme. BCMG's open and inclusive approach takes people of all ages through the rich and fascinating world of contemporary music. BCMG has received a host of national and international awards, has an extensive catalogue of CD recordings and broadcasts regularly on BBC radio.

The CBSO Centre



Concert Programme

New York Counterpoint
Three Pieces
Derive
Wynter Music
That Man's Talking Nonsense
...upon one note
Improvisation

Steve Reich
Igor Stravinsky
Pierre Boulez
Philip Cashian
Peter Wiegold
Oliver Knussen
Peter Wiegold

The Composers



Peter Weigold



Oliver Knussen



Pierre Boulez



Igor Stravinsky



Steve Reich



Phil Cashian

The Resource Pack

Aims:

- To support children and teachers attending BCMG's Schools' Concerts
- To help children and teachers gain a deeper understanding of the music and of how to use the pieces as a stimulus for classroom activities
- To encourage children to think like composers
- To introduce young people to contemporary music

General warm-up games

At the start of a music session it is often a good idea to do some warm-ups. These encourage the group to listen and work as a team. They also help develop musical skills and introduce musical concepts. Assume unless otherwise stated all warm-ups should be done in a circle.

Follow Me (developing watching and co-ordination skills)

1. Stand with the children in a circle. Ask the children to follow what you do – all the movements and all the sounds you make. Go through a range of movements and sounds. For example:
 - Clap your hands and fingers
 - Slap or tap your head, knees, tummy etc.
 - Scratch your head
 - Click your fingers
 - Stamp your feet
 - Make different vocal sounds to match movementsaaaah, ssssss, beep, whoosh, etc.
2. The children must follow you exactly and change when you change sound or action as well as performing it at the same speed and dynamic.
3. When the children have played this game a few times ask them to lead the movements for everyone else to copy.
4. A variation of this game is to ask the children **not** to change action or sound when you do but to wait until you say the word 'change'.

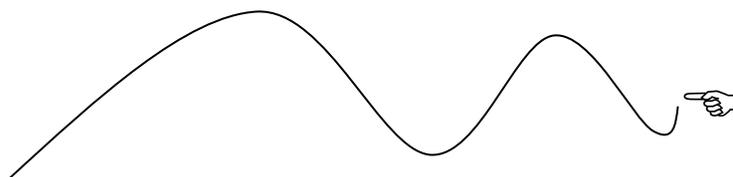
Circle Clap (developing control skills)

1. Send a clap around the circle. Each child claps just once.
2. Send a new sound around the circle e.g. sshhh. Send it in the reverse direction.
3. Send one sound in one direction and send the other sound in the other direction.

Name Game (inventing gestures and sounds)

1. Ask the children to say their name out loud.
2. As they say their name ask them to make a physical gesture or movement at the same time. Encourage the children to say their name confidently and loudly.
3. Go around the circle and after each child says their name with the movement, everyone copies exactly what they did.
4. Now ask the children to do the gesture without saying their name and tell them to find a new vocal sound that would go well with the movement.
5. Go around the circle again, this time copying the new sounds with the gestures.

Magic Finger (developing creative imagination and a sense of relative pitch - high and low -and contour)



1. Ask the children one at a time to create a shape in the air with their finger, at the same time vocalising the shape i.e. if they go up their voice goes up, if they go down their voice goes down. You will need to model this first.
2. As it moves from child to child the children should touch fingers to pass the magic on. The idea is that the sound does not stop all the way around the circle.

Don't Clap That One Back (developing listening, rhythm and team skills)

1. Clap a four-beat rhythm and ask your class to clap it back immediately as an echo.
2. At some point clap the rhythm of the words *don't clap that one back* which goes:
Long, long, short, short, long
3. Set up a rule that whenever the children hear that particular rhythm pattern they remain silent.
4. If any child claps by mistake, you score a point, if nobody claps the class scores a point.
5. First to three points wins!!
6. As it is a listening game you can also add rules which prohibit any visual signals or play the game with your eyes shut.

Riff Circle (developing rhythm and listening skills)

1. Using either clapping or unpitched percussion instruments set up a steady beat.
2. Ask each child to think of a 4 beat pattern that goes with the beat.
3. Go around the circle and listen to each child's pattern once while you keep the beat going.
4. You can develop this activity by building up the patterns. When each child starts playing they continue the pattern over and over again (ostinato), making sure they keep the rhythm steady.
5. Alternatively, ask the children to split into smaller groups and create their own riff circle with one child keeping the steady beat.
6. Try the same activity with some pitched percussion using a pentatonic (5-note) scale.

Composing, Performing and Listening

Music involves many different kinds of activities, each important in developing the musical experience, understanding and awareness of the children.

Here is a breakdown of the key elements and features of each aspect of Composing, Performing and Listening. You will notice there are many overlapping ideas as many musical activities combine aspects of all three:

	Different Approaches	Specific features	
What is the Listening Process?	Make an overview or timeline	Structure Placing of musical objects	For listening activities any music is appropriate – use a range of CDs, live performances and the children’s own work to listen to.
	Spot connections	Similarities Shapes/patterns Variations	
	Notice contrast	Texture Mood	
	Music close up	Single musical ideas Gestures Development of an idea	
What is the Performing Process?	Team work	Watching Listening Interacting	Performing is an integral part of making music. Make performances in the classroom special, by recording regularly and also by encouraging children to be a good audience.
	Different roles	Solo Background 2-way conversations Responding Synchronisation Conductor	
	Developing accuracy	Rehearsing Levels of attention Awareness Listening	
What is the Composing Process?	Communication	Performing to an audience Responding Listening	Composing is sequential with layers of activity. Usually you will need to generate , then develop , select and order before you communicate your newly composed piece.
	Generate musical ideas	Visual stimulus Rhythmic stimulus Listening stimulus Language stimulus	
	Develop musical ideas	Use imagination Create variations Different roles Multiple perspectives	
	Select and order musical ideas	Listen to existing material Create a structure Refine ideas Reveal a musical idea gradually	
	Communicate musical ideas	Draw a graphic score Conduct Perform Interact with an audience	

Case Study No. 1

Stravinsky – Three Pieces for String Quartet: second movement

The **Second Movement** is a portrait of a clown *Little Tich* who Stravinsky encountered at a London music hall. Stravinsky said of his piece;

“the jerky movement, the ups and downs, the rhythm – even the mood or joke of the music- was suggested by the art of this great clown”



The movement is built entirely from five distinctive musical gestures which repeat throughout the music. As the piece progresses some of the gestures are overlapped with others and ideas are developed and extended inventively, but without ever losing their character and always remaining instantly recognisable.

Resources: A4 paper and pencils, a range of pitched and unpitched instruments, CD player and Stravinsky track.

GENERATING MUSICAL IDEAS

1. Play the second movement of the Stravinsky all the way through. Ask the children if they can remember any musical shapes they heard, and if they can show that shape either with their voice or by moving.
2. There are 5 clear musical gestures in this music:
 - the opening loud slide down
 - plucking (pizzicato)
 - a short lyrical melody going up then down
 - loud dramatic stabs
 - frantic fast movement
3. Divide the children into groups of 4-6. Ask each group to create a movement inspired by the different gestures in the music. Remind them to respond to the shape of the phrase, the attack, the mood, the dynamics, and to use their whole bodies.
4. Choose one group for each of the gestures and play the music again. This time tell the children to do their gesture whenever they hear it in the music.
5. Now ask the children to find a way to draw the group's musical gesture on an A4 sheet, using ideas from their movements. Keep the drawing simple and bold, with one main idea.

- Using these graphics, ask the children to create a new sound in their groups, using instruments. (You may decide to swap the graphics for each group.)

They have now generated their own original musical ideas inspired by the Stravinsky and responding to the music through movement and drawing and composing.

Alternative Examples

Use another piece of music that has similar clear blocks of contrasting ideas like Messiaen's *L'Alouette Calandrelle* from *Catalogue d'Oiseaux* (piano) or Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*.

DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS

Using the new musical gesture they have just made up, talk to the children about how they can develop this idea (see the Mind Map for more information on how to develop musical ideas in different ways).

In their groups ask the children to come up with two completely different versions of their initial idea, e.g. one version could be fast with everyone repeating the gesture 4 times, the other version could be layered with each person playing the gesture in canon, starting quietly and getting louder.

Ask each group to play their original gesture with the two new versions to the rest of the class. Encourage good teamwork by watching and listening to each other carefully.

Now listen to a different piece of music that contrasts with the Stravinsky, e.g. Boulez *Derive 1*, and make a new graphic symbol inspired by this music (see Case Study 5).

Extension: ask the children to each create a completely new graphic symbol that hasn't been seen so far. Remind them to keep the design as simple as possible.

SELECT and ORDER MUSICAL IDEAS

- Using the graphic symbols they have in the group, ask the children to select 3 or 4 symbols which they will use to create a new group piece. Make sure the graphic symbols are well contrasted.
- Ask the children to create music for each symbol. Remind the children to make their music strongly characterised and well contrasted.
- Tell the children to think about the order of the musical ideas, and remind them that, like Stravinsky, they can overlap and develop their ideas.
- Encourage the children to try things in different orders and select the most effective version.

COMMUNICATE

- Give each group a long strip of wallpaper paper to draw the score of their piece.
- Perform and record each group piece.

Extension: Use these group pieces as accompaniment to dance work, either using the recordings or with live musicians for each group of dancers.

Case Study No. 2

Philip Cashian – Wynter Music

Wynter Music is a solo line for violin accompanied by a group of other instruments which provide a background texture, sometimes imitating the violin and responding to it in different ways. It was inspired by *Green Confluence*, a painting by Bryan Wynter (1974).

Resources: a range of tuned percussion, A4 paper, pens



GENERATING MUSICAL IDEAS

Show the children *Green Confluence* by Bryan Wynter. Talk to them about what kinds of shapes they can see. Ask them about the colours in the picture and discuss which shapes/lines are in the foreground or in the background.

In pairs, ask the children to select one of the lines on the painting each and to draw their own version of that single line on the paper.

Using these lines, tell each pair to find a melody that has the same shape of ups and downs, ins and outs.

DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS

- Put the pairs into groups of 4 and ask the children to combine their melodic ideas. Explain that one line will be in the foreground, i.e. more visible/audible, with the other in the background. Encourage the children to experiment with different ways of solving this problem, e.g.:
 - foreground melody is louder
 - background melody is slower
 - foreground melody repeats
 - background melody is always responding to foreground
- Play through each version and ask the children listening to explain what the relationship was between the two melodies – who was playing the foreground/background melody?

SELECT and ORDER MUSICAL IDEAS

- Now tell the children to swap roles in their group, so the background melody becomes the foreground and vice versa. Ask them to try to find a different way of making one melody stand out more than the other.
- Using these two different versions and the individual lines themselves, ask the children to compose a piece that interweaves the lines, just as the painting does. Remind them to try different orders and choose the version that sounds most interesting.

COMMUNICATE

1. The group will need to organise themselves well to move from one section of the music to the next. They may do this by counting carefully, or by having one of their group as a conductor, or by making a score they can follow.
2. Ask the group to think of a title for their piece, and perform it to the class.

Extension: Ask the children to paint their piece in the style of Bryan Wynters, choosing a colour palette that matches the mood of the music.

For more paintings by Bryan Wynter see Tate online;

<http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ArtistWorks?cgroupid=999999961&artistid=2176&page=1>

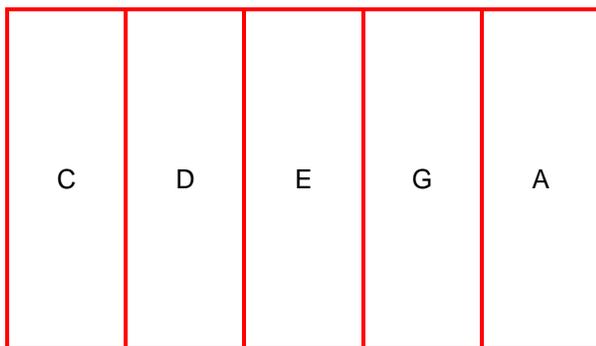
Case Study No. 3

Steve Reich – *New York Counterpoint*

New York Counterpoint is a piece for clarinet solo and tape. The tape part is recorded by the performer themselves playing 10 other versions of the same piece on clarinet and bass clarinet.

Steve Reich uses repeated rhythms and fragments of melody to create an amazing jigsaw of sound that is constantly shifting and altering in different ways, creating a mesmerising effect.

Resources: Unpitched percussion and a range of pitched percussion using a pentatonic (5-note) scale, e.g.



GENERATING MUSICAL IDEAS

1. Divide the children up into a mixture of group sizes of 2, 3, 4 and 5.

2. Give each group a set of instruments, either pitched or unpitched.
3. Ask the children to sit in a small circle (3s, 4s, 5s) or opposite each other (2s).
4. Using their instruments tell the children to play on one beat each, making the first beat the strongest in the group. Ask the children how they can do this, e.g. by using the loudest instrument, or the lowest or highest pitch, or playing the other beats more quietly.
5. Ask the groups of 2 to play together, then the 3s, then the 4s and then the 5s. Make sure everyone is playing at the same speed as each other, and not speeding up.

DEVELOPING MUSICAL IDEAS

1. Now the groups are going to make their patterns a bit more complex. Keeping the first beat the same as before, can they make a pattern that divides the beats up?
2. Ask one group to demonstrate. Keep the person on the first note doing a single beat. Then ask the other children to divide their beat up, either into two or three, e.g.



could become:



3. Listen to each group's new pattern.

SELECT and ORDER MUSICAL IDEAS

1. Listen through to the new versions. Organise the groups in different ways, e.g:
 - each group plays in sequence, one after the other
 - all the 2s play twice through, then the 3s twice through, then the 4s, etc.
 - start and stop different groups with a conductor, layering different patterns on top of each other
 - Play all the unpitched patterns first, then the pitched patterns
2. Talk to the class about which versions sounded most interesting. Discuss how you might start and end the piece with all the groups involved in a whole class composition.

COMMUNICATE

1. Ask different children to conduct a version of the piece. Talk about how the structure will work first, so everyone knows what to expect.
2. Make a chart showing how the music is structured. This can be used as a score.

2. Now ask the children to think about how to organise all 4 parts in their group. Explain that they can decide which part starts and finishes the music. Remind them to try different versions and choose the one that is most musical.

COMMUNICATE MUSICAL IDEAS

Perform each group piece. Ask the children listening to identify who has which role in the group.

Case Study No. 5

Pierre Boulez – *Derive 1*



Derive 1 is all about texture and colour, with different instruments fluttering and combining to create a shimmering soundworld.

Resources: a blindfold, large paper, pencils, cardboard L shapes or frames, cd player and recording of *Derive 1*

GENERATING MUSICAL IDEAS

1. Give out large plain paper and pencils. Ask the children to shut their eyes or put on blindfolds. As they listen to the recording of *Derive 1* tell them to draw the shapes of the sounds of the music that they hear.
2. Look at the shapes drawn and give out card frames of different shapes. Ask the children to use the frame to show the most interesting part of their drawing.
3. Taking this as a starting point, create a musical texture that matches the shapes drawn.

Extension: Make an unpitched version, then a pitched version of the music.
In the pitched version try using different, unusual combinations of notes to create different moods.



Turn upside down



Change the rhythm



Layer

Extend

Musical Idea

Mix together



Play backwards

Add

Blend

Change Pitch

Change the timbre (instrumental colour)

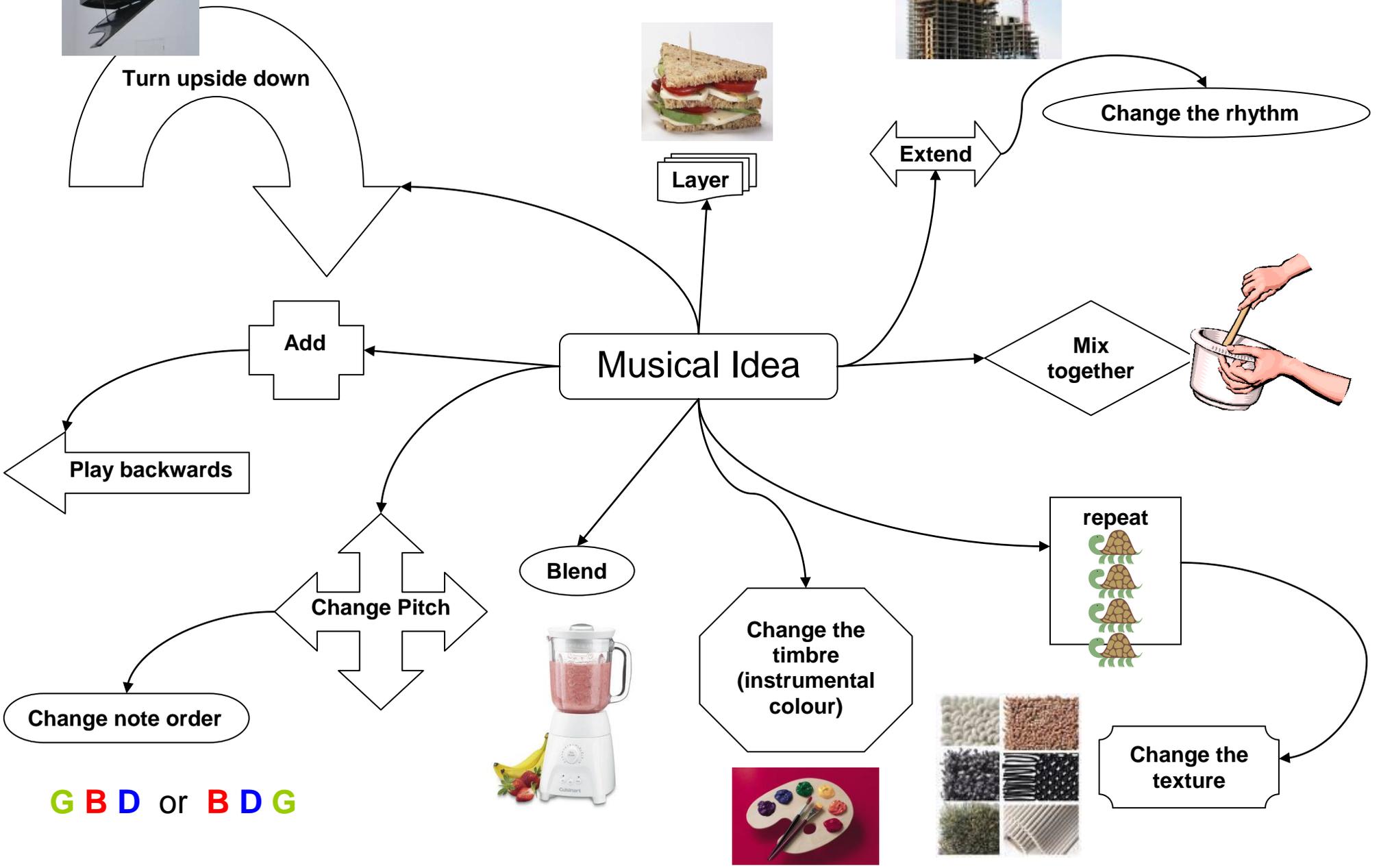
repeat



Change note order

Change the texture

G B D or B D G



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