

Birmingham
Contemporary
Music Group



Transformations!

BCMG Schools' Concerts
Resource Pack 2011



Introduction

In February 2011 Birmingham Contemporary Music Group presented its fifth annual Schools' Concerts conducted at the CBSO Centre, following the huge successes of the last four years. Just as children turn cardboard boxes into secret dens and pirate ships, composers often recycle old ideas, create new versions of music from the past or borrow from the music of other composers. This hour-long concert brought together 10 short sparkling pieces by today's top composers.

Birmingham Contemporary Music Group

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.

CBSO Centre



How the Resource Pack works

This pack presents four KS2 music projects based around the music performed at the BCMG Schools' Concerts in February 2010. Each main activity is explained in detail, followed by some preparatory activities which will help you and your class build up the skills needed in the project.

Aims

- To support and prepare 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 explore different kinds of notation
- To encourage performing, listening, conducting and interacting as musicians
- To introduce young people to contemporary music

How do composers create music?

Music is made up a variety of different ingredients which can be transformed in some way. They are:

Melody	A series of notes/pitches in succession
Rhythm	The patterning of sounds or silences over time
Harmony	Notes that are layered on top of each other and sound together to create chords
Texture	The overall musical sound defined by the number of and relationship of different parts and lines.
Timbre	The quality or colour of a particular instrument used
Structure	The organisation of the music into sections

In this pack we will explore different ways of working with these musical elements through a wide range of listening, performing, conducting and composing activities drawn from the ways that professional composers actually work, adapted to be fun and effective for the KS2 classroom.

Duetti

Composer: Luciano Berio

Duetti is a set of little pieces for two violins where the composer explores lots of different ways two instruments can play together. Each of them is a portrait of a famous musician, composer or friend of Berio.

PROJECT 1

Two by Two – Composing for 2 Musicians

Skills and concepts to be explored:

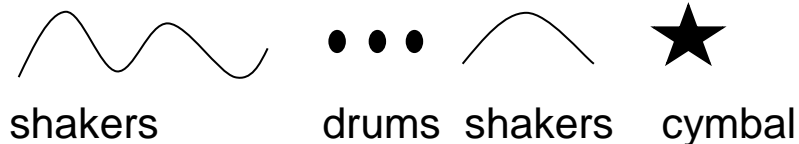
Composing skills: Generating, selecting, varying and organising musical ideas

Music skills: Listening, playing together, teamwork

1. Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair a matched set of instruments, e.g. a drum and egg shaker and 2 chime bars each (different notes).
2. Ask the pairs to create a short piece where both players are playing exactly the same as each other. Give them 2 or 3 minutes to do this.
3. Listen to each of the pairs. Notice which pairs are playing together well, and encourage all the children to watch each other carefully to help with this. As you listen describe and support the children in describing what they hear.
 - Can they notice any repeating patterns?
 - How does the music start and finish?
 - Do some ideas come back?
 - Do they use all the instruments?
4. Thinking about the music they have just created, ask the class how two people could play music together other than playing exactly the same music at the same time. Brainstorm the ideas on the board (see Resource Sheet 1 for a list of ideas). The idea here is that they use what they have already created as the basis.
5. Ask two children to demonstrate one of the ideas from the brainstorm list (or Resource Sheet 1) to the rest of the class.
6. Now ask the pairs to select 2 or 3 ideas from the list to try, to create a new version of their music.
7. Next, ask them to think about a good order for their different versions to create a slightly longer piece. This could include repetitions of a section if they like. Ask the children to choose a title for their piece.

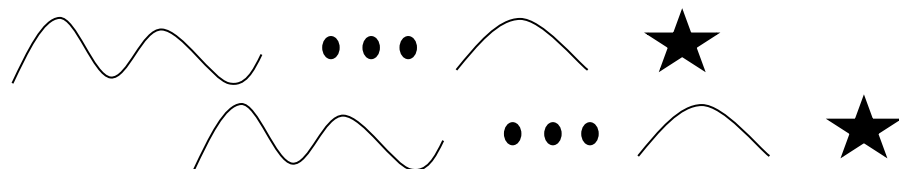
RESOURCE SHEET 1

Imagine an idea that goes like this.....

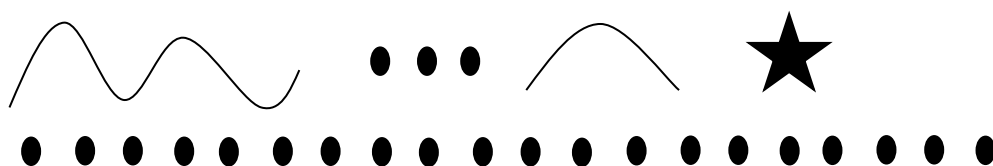


This could be performed by two people in many ways.....

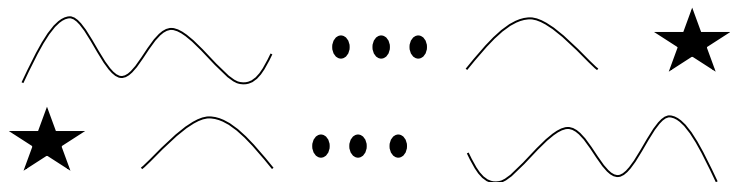
1. One starts and the other follows (a round)



2. One plays the original and the second plays something different (an accompaniment)

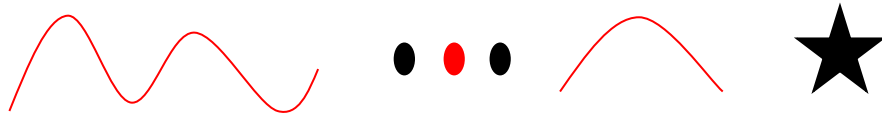


3. One plays the original the second plays it backwards or upside down at the same time

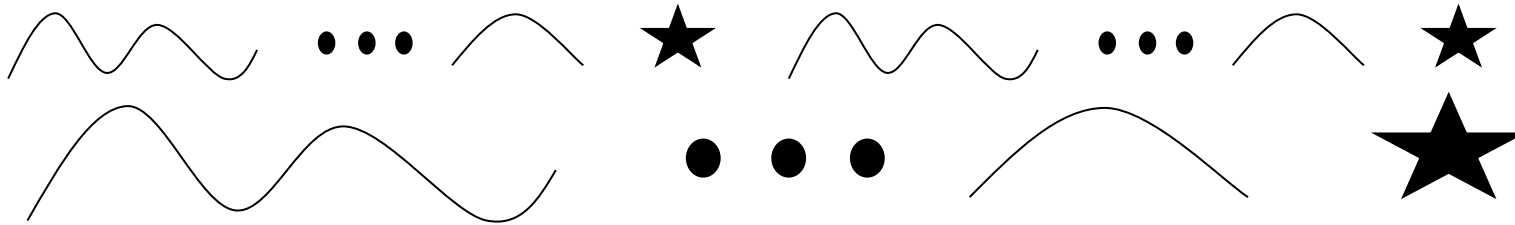


RESOURCE SHEET 2

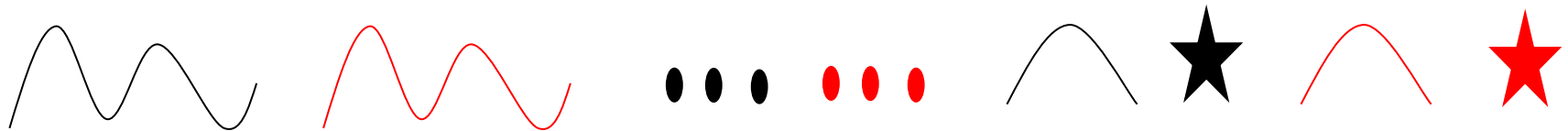
4. One plays the first note the second the second note the first the third note etc. (hocketing)



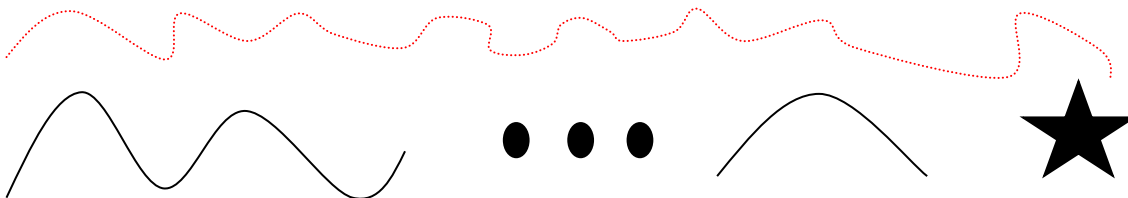
5. One plays the original and the second plays it much faster or much slower



6. One plays part of it the other echoes it (call and response)



7. One plays the original the second adds extras on top (decoration)



Cardiac Arrest

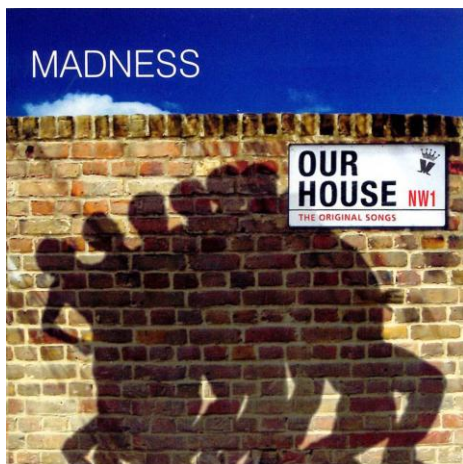
Composer: Thomas Adès

In this piece composer Thomas Adès transforms a pop song by the 80s pop group Madness. In this version, instead of the usual pop band and vocals, Adès arranges it for a contemporary classical music ensemble. The process of choosing which instruments play which bit is called **orchestration**. Apart from using completely different instruments, Adès's version is structurally very similar to the original.

Echoing the creative process that Adès went through, this activity will see the children creating their own version of the Madness song *Our House* for classroom instruments. We will be much more flexible than Adès in how we take the different bits and stick them back together.

PROJECT 2

Our House by Madness for Classroom Instruments



Skills and concepts to be explored:

Composing skills: Selecting instruments, working with musical layers, ordering sections

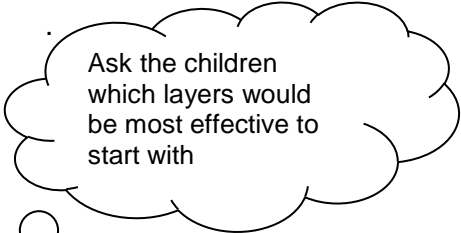
Music skills: Working to a pulse, listening to and identifying a range of instruments, following a conductor, using graphic notation.

1. With the class, watch the Youtube video of the Madness song *Our House*, and explain to the children that they are going to use the different musical layers in this song to create their own version. Ask the class if there are any particular bits they remember. If the children can't explain in words ask them to sing or show (possibly with movements or gestures) what they noticed.
2. Listen a second time to the beginning of the track, and this time stop and start the video so the class can see and hear exactly what is happening in the different layers of music (the shape, the instrument etc.). As new things are spotted, ask a child to draw a graphic symbol (see Preparation Activity 1) to represent that musical layer on the board. (Here you might have a few suggestions and then pick the one the class thinks works best).

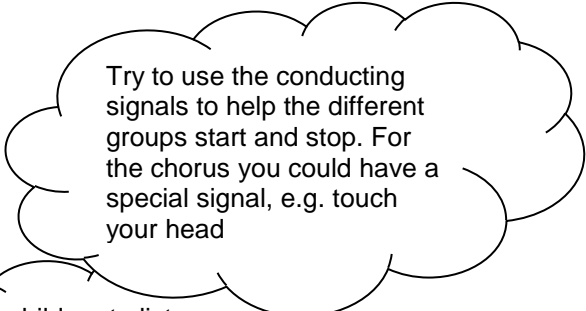
On the next page are the five different things to notice as well as descriptions of them in words and graphics. Most of them occur within the first minute and then return through the rest of the song in different combinations.

3. When you have listed all these (plus anything else you notice) discuss with the class what types of classroom instruments they could use to match the Madness instruments. Suggestions have been made on the next page too. As you think about matching sounds consider whether the instrument can play short or sustained, spiky or smooth.
4. Divide the class into five groups, each focussing on one of the musical layers. Give each group their graphic symbol, and ask them to come up with their own musical version of their idea. Make sure they can play it either just once, or repeating it. Listen to each group's music.
5. Now look back at the video and focus on the chorus: "Our house - - in the middle of our street - our house". Ask the children to join in with the chorus line (making sure they repeat the words the correct number of times!).

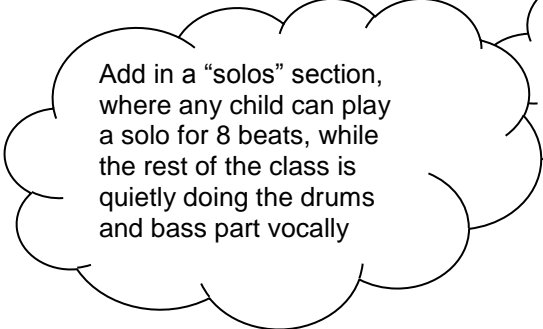
Now you have a jigsaw puzzle of musical material which you can start to organise with the class into their own special version of the song, using the music from each of the five groups and everyone doing the chorus. Don't worry too much about the original version – make this your classes' new interpretation. Finally, draw up a big plan of the piece and perform it as part of an assembly. If you are feeling confident divide into smaller groups and identify more musical ideas that could be replicated.



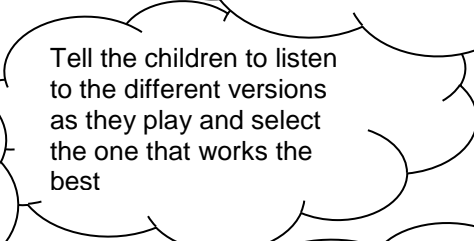
Ask the children which layers would be most effective to start with



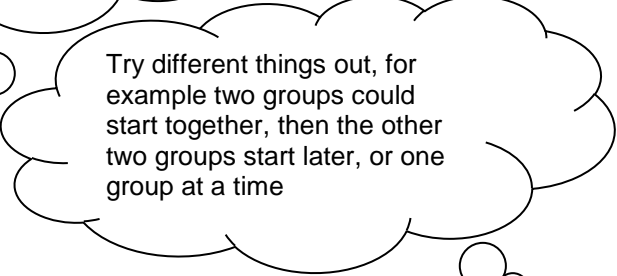
Try to use the conducting signals to help the different groups start and stop. For the chorus you could have a special signal, e.g. touch your head



Add in a "solos" section, where any child can play a solo for 8 beats, while the rest of the class is quietly doing the drums and bass part vocally



Tell the children to listen to the different versions as they play and select the one that works the best



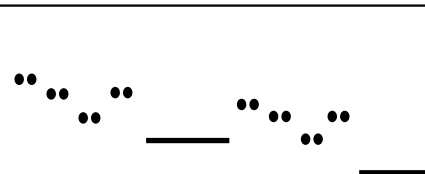
Try different things out, for example two groups could start together, then the other two groups start later, or one group at a time

NB it might be useful to photocopy lots of versions of the graphic symbols to help you organise your ideas

RESOURCE SHEET 3



The saxophones and trumpets play a spiky rhythm with four fast pairs of notes followed by a longer note. Sometimes with this rhythm the instruments go up in pitch and sometimes go down.



Classroom suggestion:
Recorders
Chime bars and metallophones
Violins



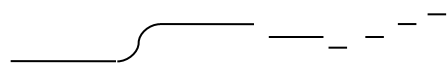
The drum kit plays on the strong beat with the bass drum and the cymbal and snare drum on the weak beat.



Classroom suggestion:
Large drums
Voices beat-boxing
Tambourines



The strings (violins and cellos) play a long smooth melody that starts with a long held note followed by two very short notes leading up to two long notes.



Classroom suggestion:
Chime bars and metallophones
Violins

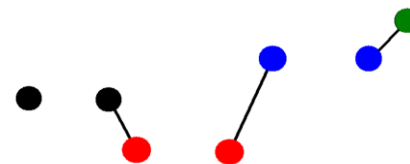
Backing vocals. After the solo voice starts, the backing vocals sing a smooth line, with three descending notes leading to a long held note on "ah-ah-ah-aaaaah".

ah
ah
ah
aaaaah

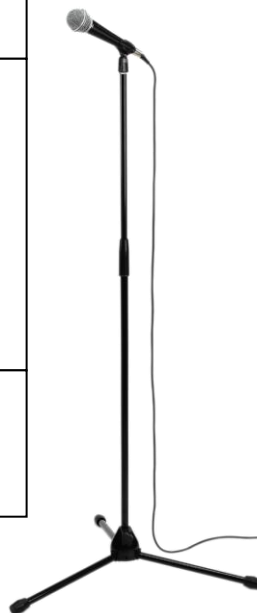
Classroom suggestion:
Voices
Recorders
Violins



Bass line. This appears a bit later in the chorus and has a strong rhythm which repeats: dum - - da dum - - da dum - - .



Classroom suggestion:
Body percussion (slaps and claps)
Bass xylophones
Boomwhackers



RESOURCE SHEET 4

Our House - Drawing sounds

- The higher up on the page the higher the note in pitch
- A gap represents the length of the silence between two sounds
- The length of a line gives an indication of how long or short it should be

Graphic symbol 1	Graphic symbol 2
Graphic symbol 3	Graphic symbol 4

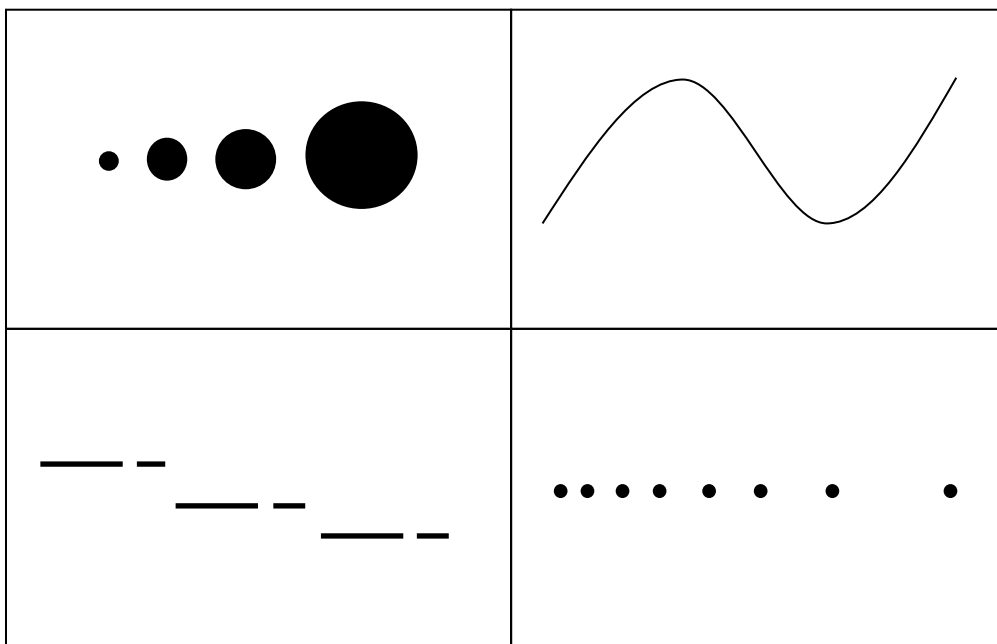
Preparation Activity 1

Drawing sounds

Graphic notation is an effective and easy way to write sounds down, without needing to use musical notation. This is useful when you are either listening to music, or creating your own, as it helps to identify and differentiate different bits of the musical layers being used.

1. Give out A4 plain paper divided into four boxes or individual white boards to the class.
Explain that they are going to draw the sounds you make.

Below are a series of graphic symbols. We have tried to keep them simple and short while at the same time exploring range of musical elements, for example: slow, fast, short, long, going up, going down.



As you read the symbols in general.....

- The higher up on the page the higher the note in pitch
 - A gap represents the length of the silence between two sounds.
 - The length of a line gives an indication of how long or short it should be
 - The larger the object the louder
2. Now ask one of the children to suggest a sound that could be drawn, using voice or instruments while the rest of the class draws a graphic symbol.

Extension:

- Ask a child to draw a graphic symbol and then ask another child to sing or play it
- Create a short piece putting up the symbols you have so far and point to the sound you want, or decide an order for the sounds, maybe with some repetitions

Preparation Activity 2

Following a conductor

Conducting is a simple and fun way to organise and shape music on the spot, just by using a few simple signals.

1. Sit in a triangle, and give out 3 different groups of instruments, e.g. shakers in one section, drums in another section and chime bars in the third section.
2. Explain you will conduct the class with a start signal, when they can all play, and a stop signal when they must stop instantly. Show the class your signals, e.g.
start and keep going = pointing both hands in front of you
stop = pointing both hands up to the ceiling
Make your gestures “larger than life” and very clear.
(Another signal you might prefer is: open hand = start, closed fist = stop)
3. Practise starting and stopping the class, making sure they watch you very closely. Vary the lengths of sounds and silences to try to catch them out.
4. Choose one of the children to conduct. Ask them to show the start and stop signal before they begin, to make sure the signals are clear, strong gestures.
5. Now explain that the conductor will control the 3 different groups of instruments, starting and stopping the groups at different times. Try this yourself conducting first, and experiment with layering the different sounds on top of each other, as well as having each group playing alone. Now ask one of the children to conduct. (The conductor is now also composing, deciding which sounds to have next in the music!)

Preparation Activity 3

Countdown!

If you are working with a pulse, you can use a simple counting method to create neat beginnings and endings of pieces.

1. In a circle, explain you are going to practise a countdown ending.
2. Set up a pulse tapping on your knees, and tell the children when you count down like this “4 – 3 – 2 – 1 – bomp”, you want them to carry on tapping, and all end together with a strong “bomp”. As you count down, hold up your fingers to count as well. You can count slowly or quickly; as long as you count with the beat, it will work!
3. Ask one of the children to suggest a 4 beat rhythm. Get the class to clap and repeat the rhythm, and lead the ending “4-3-2-1 bomp”. The class keep the rhythm going until you reach “bomp” when they all clap together to finish.
4. When the class are confident with this, try the same activity with instruments (you could have different rhythms going on together if you like).
5. You can also use this as a starting signal, where everyone starts on “bomp!”

Hinterland

Composer: Tansy Davies

Sometimes composers like to rework an existing piece. Tansy Davies's *Hinterland* does this using an amazing range of percussion instruments. Alongside familiar instruments such as the keyboard, viola, cello, double bass, flute, bass clarinet, contrabassoon, horn and trombone Tansy uses a dustbin, a Peking opera gong, a log drum, tin can, a thunder sheet, a bass drum, a gourd shaker and a splash cymbal:



This activity asks you to use classroom instruments and a collection of 'sound-makers' to create your own exciting and unusual version of some music you already know.

Skills and concepts to be explored

Composing skills: Selecting sounds, creating a structure

Music skills: playing accurately and with control, listening to and comparing sounds (high/low, long/short)

Project 3

Old Tune - New Instruments

1. Divide the class into groups of five. Give each group a familiar song, nursery rhyme or TV theme tune. Tell them to keep their tune a secret from the other groups.
2. Ask the children to think about the melody line, mapping out the highs and lows of the notes in the tune. Use the example of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (see next page).
3. In their groups, ask the children to map out the melody of their music on Resource Sheet 3 using a pencil circle to represent each note.
4. Now explain to the children they are going to play their music on the instruments, trying to match the high and low sounds. Make sure each group has an interesting range of instruments, for example:



5. Explain to the children that they are going to find out about the different sounds available from their collection. Using an egg-timer, set them these two 2-minute challenges:
 - Organise your group's instruments from the lowest sound to the highest sound
 - ...from the quietest to the loudest sound.
6. Now the groups are ready to work out how to play their tune. Using coloured stickers or felt tips, give each instrument a colour. On the sheet, colour in the blobs to show which instrument plays which note. For example: let's say the drum = red, so if the drum is the lowest sound, colour all the lowest blobs in red. (See example).
7. Try playing the tune on the percussion – it should sound a bit strange! Ask the other groups to try to guess which tune it is.
8. Now add in some other instruments to create different versions of the music. You can include voices as well, which could either sing the song 'normally' or reinvent the music. See Resource Sheet 5 for some fun things to try:

RESOURCE SHEET 5

Sing to match the instrumental sounds



Make a 'crazy class percussion collection' with your class. Ask the children to each bring in an unusual 'sound maker' in to school



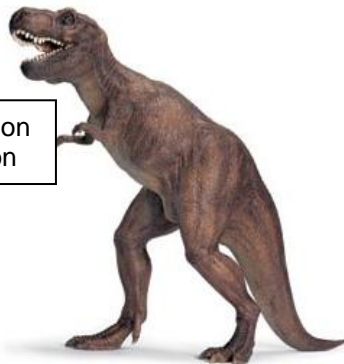
TIMBRE

Stretch the gaps between the notes so that the low notes are lower and the high notes are much higher



PITCH

Make a loud version and a quiet version



DYNAMICS



Divide into groups and sing/play at different speeds with the faster group repeating as necessary



Make a fast version and a slow version

TEMPO



Make up a rhythm section to go with the melody

RHYTHM

Think about building an introduction and an ending



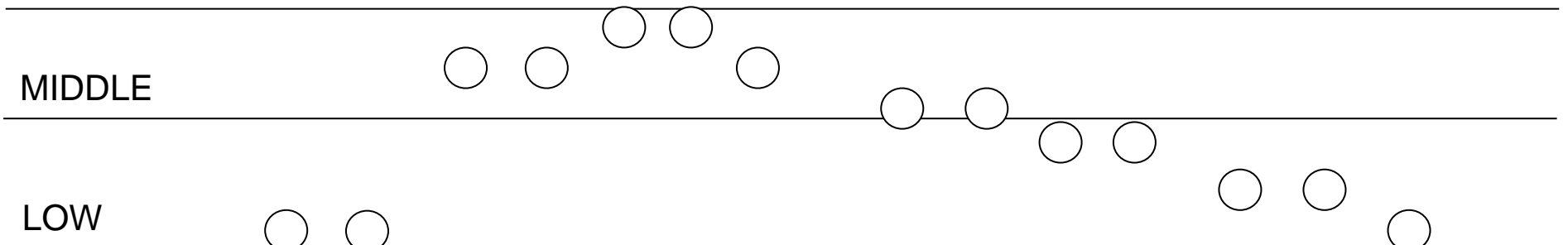
STRUCTURE

RESOURCE SHEET 6

HIGH

MIDDLE

LOW



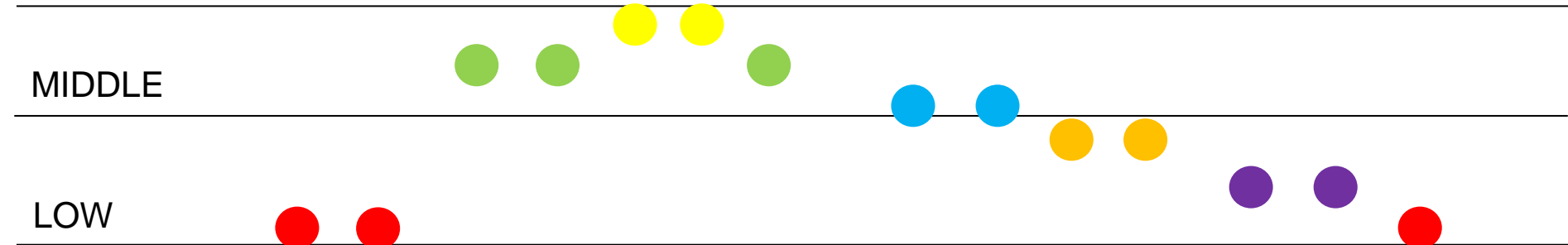
Twin- kle Twin- kle lit- tle star, How I won- der what you are (etc.)

Detailed description: A three-line musical staff with labels 'HIGH', 'MIDDLE', and 'LOW' on the left. The staff contains white circles representing notes. The notes are positioned as follows: 'Twin-' is on the low line, 'kle' is on the low-middle line; 'Twin-' is on the middle line, 'kle' is on the middle-low line; 'lit-' is on the high line, 'tle' is on the high-middle line, 'star,' is on the middle-high line; 'How' is on the middle line, 'I' is on the middle-low line; 'won-' is on the low-middle line, 'der' is on the low line; 'what' is on the low-middle line, 'you' is on the low line, 'are (etc.)' is on the low-low line.

HIGH





MIDDLE

LOW



Twin- kle Twin- kle lit- tle star, How I won- der what you are (etc.)

Detailed description: A three-line musical staff with labels 'HIGH', 'MIDDLE', and 'LOW' on the left. The staff contains colored circles representing notes. The notes are positioned as follows: 'Twin-' is on the low line (red), 'kle' is on the low-middle line (red); 'Twin-' is on the middle line (green), 'kle' is on the middle-low line (green); 'lit-' is on the high line (yellow), 'tle' is on the high-middle line (yellow), 'star,' is on the middle-high line (green); 'How' is on the middle line (blue), 'I' is on the middle-low line (blue); 'won-' is on the low-middle line (orange), 'der' is on the low line (orange); 'what' is on the low-middle line (purple), 'you' is on the low line (purple), 'are (etc.)' is on the low-low line (red).

-  = DRUM
-  = CHIME BAR
-  = BOOMWHACKER
-  = SHAKER
-  = WHISTLE
-  = BELL

RESOURCE SHEET 7

HIGH

MIDDLE

LOW

HIGH

MIDDLE

LOW

Preparation Activity 1

Eights

Count 8 beats with a steady pulse. Use a woodblock or small drum to keep the beat (do this yourself as it is hard to keep it steady), repeating over and over again, keeping a steady pulse.

1. Ask the children to join in with the counting out loud and all clap on the first beat. You can help show the first beat with the woodblock by doing a larger movement on beat one.
2. Repeat this until everyone is confident with clapping on beat one. Then do the same thing without counting out loud (but counting internally).
3. As soon as the children are confident doing this, explain that they will now choose another number from 2 to 8.
4. The group will carry on clapping on number one, but on the other number each person has chosen, they will make up a vocal sound. So if one child chooses 4, and another chooses 7 it would sound like this:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
clap			whoo				
clap						boing	

Keep repeating this over and over again, always sticking to the same sounds and numbers. Listen for the patterns being created by the sounds, making sure that everyone is clapping together on the number 1.

Extension

- Use instruments instead of vocal sounds
- Switch from vocal sounds to instruments and then back again!

Preparation Activity 2

Circle Sounds

1. Sit in a circle with the percussion instruments. Each child will take turns to play one sound each around the circle.
2. Explain that you cannot start your sound until the previous sound has completely died away.
3. Before the game starts, ask the children which of them has an instrument that will sound a long time (e.g. gong, chime bar, magic chimes). Listen to that sound and count how many seconds the sound lasts.

Les Baricades Mistérieuses

Composer: Thomas Adès

The melody *Les Baricades Mystérieuses* was written by Francois Couperin who lived in the early 1700s. You can listen to the piece on Spotify. Thomas Adès has made a new version of this piece, keeping the melody and rhythm the same, but choosing different instruments to play the melody, the bass line and the harmony. This activity is mainly a performing one with the children learning different lines of the original and putting them together in different combination. The creative bit is choosing different styles of playing e.g. spiky or smooth - in music known as “articulation”.

Skills and concepts to be explored

Composing Skills: different ways of playing – “articulation”

Music skills: playing with a steady pulse, on- and off-beats, conducting, performing as part of a group

Ask the children to try singing and/or playing the melody. It has a swinging, catchy rhythm, with lots of syncopated beats (off-beats). Here is part one of the melody written down:

MELODY part 1

Notes: G A B

1 & 2 3 & 4 1 & 2 3 & 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

(rest)G B A (rest)G B A

Putting it together

1. Using percussion, recorders and voices, divide the class into four groups:

- instrumental melody
- vocal melody
- bass line
- descant

Ask each group to practise their part, so that they can play it either once through, or repeating it 4 times.

2. When each group is confident with their part, ask them to think about a special way of playing their music. Can they play it with a particular character, e.g. bouncy, or smooth? Ask them to try some different ways of playing and choose the most interesting one.
3. Now you can fit the 4 groups together. Count the 4 beats to help everyone stay together.
4. Experiment with different groups starting the music, and different combinations of groups. Organise this by conducting the groups.

RESOURCE SHEET 8

Les Baricades Mistérieuses

MELODY part 1

Notes: G A B

1 & 2 3 & 4 1 & 2 3 & 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

(rest) G B A (rest) G B A

1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
rest		G	B		A			rest		G	B		A			rest				rest			

RESOURCE SHEET 9

Les Baricades Mistérieuses

MELODY part 2
Notes E F# G

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 & 2 3 4 & 1 2 & 3 4

(rest) F# G G F# E E F# (rest)

1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&
rest								rest		F#	G			G	F#	E			E	F#			rest

RESOURCE SHEET 10

Les Baricades Mistérieuses

Bass Line

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

(rest) G D G D E B C D

1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
rest	G	D		G	D			E		B		C		D	

RESOURCE SHEET 11

Les Baricades Mistérieuses

Descant Line
Notes B C D

The musical notation shows a descant line in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are B, D, B, D, B, D, C, D. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 above the notes. The notes are: B (1), D (2), B (3), D (4), B (1), D (2), C (3), D (4).

1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
B	rest	rest	D	B	rest	rest	D	B	rest	rest	D	C	rest	rest	D

Preparation Activity 1

Don't Clap That One Back

1. Clap a four-beat rhythm and ask your class to clap it back immediately as an echo.
2. Show the class the rhythm of the words *don't clap that one back* which goes: long - long - short short long. Explain this rhythm is a signal to NOT clap back the pattern. Practise the pattern a few times so the children can easily recognise it.
3. Now play the game, clapping a few 4 beat rhythms then the Don't clap that one back rhythm. (Try not to change your body language when you do this!)
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.

Preparation Activity 2

On the beat - off the beat

1. Ask the children to tap a steady beat, using their left hand on their right knee. These are the beats, and you are tapping ON the beat. Count 1,2,3,4, 1,2,3,4 as you tap.
2. Now show them how to hold their right hand above their left as it taps, so that your left hand is tapping alternately, first against first your leg then tapping your right hand. The taps on the right hand are called "OFF the beat", or syncopated. Count again, this time 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &, etc. The '&'s come on the right hand taps.
3. O When The Saints, The Bare Necessities, Down By the Riverside are all songs that use 'off beats'. Try singing and tapping the beat in time and notice where the off beats come.

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