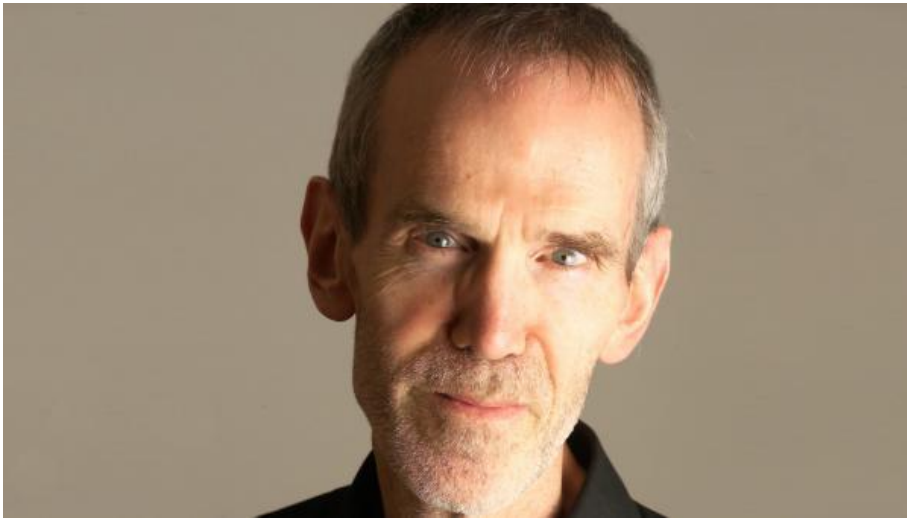


Happy Birthday Howard!

Birmingham
Contemporary
Music Group



The composer **Howard Skempton** is celebrating his **75th Birthday** this year. BCMG are celebrating his birthday with **concerts, workshops** and **new resources**. This resource is one of them.

In this activity you will **explode** the melody Happy Birthday and **put it back together** in your own way to compose a **new** piece of music.

Many composers **borrow** or **steal snippets** of other people's music to use in their own music. One of the most famous of these is *Hammered Out* by composer **Mark Anthony Turnage** who borrows from **Beyonce's Single Ladies**.

Turnage's son Milo loved to dance to the track and so he created this piece. Here it is performed by the **National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain**:

<https://youtu.be/X6SX-zU0gyk>

Composer **Thomas Adés** uses *Cardiac Arrest* by **Madness**:

<https://open.spotify.com/track/7b0leEcRSXXlwVWhlQ7tZV?si=5ded47e17cf64cdc>

<https://open.spotify.com/track/4rnhgtuYoSU8ttjUKQtB9y?si=8a9929fd30674e5a>

Here, **Thomas Adés** arranges a much older melody *Les barricades mystérieuses* by **Francois Couperain**:

<https://open.spotify.com/track/2XqvLbQiIGzVHSDGeKynlc?si=49b41de8b7704c10>

<https://open.spotify.com/track/6udkpPk95izB8dxmgEYaPm>

Your Turn!



Play the melody of Happy Birthday (see below):



Now **look** and **listen** again. Play the melody **section by section**. What do you **notice** about the melody: the **melodic shapes**, **rhythm patterns**, **structure** etc. Create a **list** and **mark** the different sections/phrases.

Choose a short **excerpt** of Happy Birthday. Play it again and **play around with it** by **varying** it in **different ways**. You could **change** the **itches**, **dynamics**, **duration**, **speed**, **articulation**, play it **backwards**, **repeat** it etc. Use the **downloadable variation ideas** below to give you ideas. Try it with different bits of the melody and note your favourite ones.

Here are some **examples** - a dramatic loud version of the **first three notes** repeated:



or a soft trilling version of the **arpeggio falling figure**:



Choose some of your **favourite ideas** from your explorations to use for your final composition. **Play around** with putting them in different **orders** to make a longer piece until you find a **combination** and **sequence** you like. Think about how you will **begin** and **end**. You can **repeat ideas** as many times as you like.

You could **record** your different ideas and use [Audacity](https://www.audacityteam.org/) to **organise** the different sound clips/variations.

Please send any music you create to learning@bcmg.org.uk