

## MUSPRA Qualifications

Unit Code: 202

Unit Title: Composing Music (Style)

Credit Level: 2

Credit Value: 8 (80 TQT)

### Unit Aim

The aim of this unit is to facilitate an awareness of compositional protocols in a specific musical style. The purpose of the unit is to create music, which is reflective (a pastiche) of existing work in the chosen style.

### Unit Content

Using the learning outcome as the main point of reference, a scheme of work for this unit will include opportunities for learners to develop the following:

#### Contextual Knowledge

- Knowledge of genres/styles, composers, artists and producers
- Understanding aspects of popular music history and culture
- Origins of popular music e.g. African roots

#### Composition Skills and Techniques

- Structure and arrangement e.g. verse-chorus
- Instrumentation i.e. range, relevance and suitability
- Analysis of key compositional elements
- Understanding standard harmony
- Use of scales and modes relative to the style being composed
- Riffs/motivic and melodic development
- Counterpoint,
- Modulation

#### Knowledge of Instrumentation

- Instrumental ranges and capabilities
- Playing techniques (e.g. fingering, pull off, harmonics)
- Tuning systems
- Intonation
- Facility on an instrument/DAW, as/where appropriate

#### Practical Knowledge of Music Theory

- Understanding stylistic rhythms and time, tempi, BPM, bars
- Understanding and identification of stylistic form and structure.
- Understanding melodic form
- Understanding and identification of standard chords and harmony

#### Practical Knowledge of Musical Devices

- Modulation and key change
- Counterpoint
- Pedal notes

#### Aural Skills

- Identification of hook lines and strong melodic content
- Identification of harmonic relationships

**Practical Knowledge of Notation**

- Note & Rest Values
- Bar lines & Bar line formats (e.g. repeats, double bar line etc.)
- Dynamic/directional symbols and their meanings
- Key Signatures
- Drum Notation
- Clefs - Treble, Bass, plus awareness Drum, Percussion (e.g. 1 line, 2 lines etc.)

**Score Production Skills**

- Use of DAW based scoring packages (where applicable)
- Creating a full score
- Creating a lead sheet
- Creating chord charts
- Creating graphic diagrams

**Analytical Skills**

- The ability to analyse and assess own skills and personal aims
- The ability to evaluate own work and consider ways of improving own performance when composing music
- The ability to assess own skills base and development needs
- The capacity to respond positively to tutor comments and evaluations
- The capacity to assess and act upon Health & Safety considerations

**Organisational Skills**

- The capacity to plan and prepare effectively for music arrangement activity
- The means to access the personal musical and peripheral equipment required for composing music, relevant to them
- Time management skills – working to a given time frame, working to deadlines

**Suggested Delivery Ideas**

Delivery should be a mixture of classroom-based and location based work. Classroom sessions will normally focus on developing theoretical knowledge or be research-oriented. These will be enriched with practical workshop style musical development sessions, with tutor support.

Learners will need to spend time generating and developing ideas within a style. The delivery may involve large group discussions on existing well known compositions and songwriters. The tutor may set smaller groups activities to form small teams who may work together assessing each other's ideas within a given style.

In order to provide an appropriate and effective learning environment, tutors may wish to consider the following approaches:

- Practical sessions
- Group work
- Workshops
- Audio examples
- Video presentation
- Peer presentation and demonstration
- Lecture
- Seminar, delivering technical and contextual knowledge
- Guest speakers
- Use of articles and books
- Tutorials

Tutors might consider delivery in conjunction with relevant contextual and practical knowledge and skill development such as active listening, use of sequencers/DAW, remixing, instrumental study etc.

## Suggested Activity Ideas

For learners to engage in creating effective compositions a diverse range of activities will be required. Learners should have a mainly practical, explorative experience.

Tutors should help learners to put theoretical knowledge into practice and to explore and experiment with the instruments and techniques.

The majority of the assessment will be on the final outcomes - the compositions in score and recording/sequence forms. Learners however can also review other learners' work, and there could be practical workshops/demonstrations to reinforce particular concepts and relevant practice.

Learners can be encouraged to engage in a number of activities to support the creation of arrangements, these can be tutor led, independent and group based activities as outlined below:

- Practical composition task e.g. learners compose 3 minute piece which incorporates key composition elements of given genre
- Analysis of 'classic' album that defines a genre of style focusing on the compositional elements
- Student present research of their chosen genre to the group; peer feedback and group discussion
- Analysis and research of harmony, chord progressions, modes and scales etc that relate specifically to the genre or style.
- Analysis and research of rhythm and tempi associated with that style.
- Group quiz; learners are divided into groups to answer questions presented by tutor or other students (e.g. PowerPoint presentation)
- Tutor presents audio visual examples of music genres/styles
- Interactive handouts for formative assessment
- Ear training; listening to pieces of music to identify key compositional elements, characteristics and genre etc.
- Pair work, researching different styles/genres and presenting findings to the group
- Draw up a musical genre/style family tree

## Summative Assessment Methods

In both cases, the compositions should be between two and a half and three minutes in length.

Submitted work should clearly demonstrate the learner's ability to compose music convincingly so that rhythmic, melodic and harmonic content are coherent and recognisable as being representative of a chosen style/genre.

Scores, charts, diagrams, screen shots etc. must be clear and accurate. Where learners have used music notation in their scores, this should be correctly presented, in line with convention.

The evaluation component should demonstrate the student's awareness of their own development and the success of the composition in relation to the brief.

## Recommended Evidence

1.1 Audio representations of the composition

1.2 A representative score, chart, diagrams, screen shots etc. for the composition

1.3 An evaluative report/audio or video presentation/responses to a questionnaire

## Grading Criteria

<b>Distinction</b>	<p>To achieve a <b>distinction</b>, learners should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show excellent and inventive compositional skills, which demonstrate an awareness of the requirements of a specific musical style, which comprehensively display the characteristics of that style. The composition would be a convincing representation of the style at this at this level. They display a strong ability to work well within the specifics of the brief and display good time management skills.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate excellent abilities at representing the compositions through notation preferably notation that clearly indicates each part i.e. stave notation and a combination of other notation</li> <li>3. Describe strengths and areas for development showing a greater understanding of progress, with a self- assessment style approach offering solutions to areas for development.</li> </ol>
<b>Merit</b>	<p>To achieve a <b>merit</b>, learners should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show good and competent compositional skills, which demonstrate an awareness of the requirements of a specific musical style, which display most of the characteristics of that style. The composition would be a relatively convincing representation of the style at this at this level. They display a good ability to work well within the specifics of the brief and display good time management skills.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate clear abilities at representing the compositions through notation preferably notation that clearly indicates each part i.e. stave notation and a combination of other notation.</li> <li>3. Describe strengths and areas for development showing an understanding of progress, offering some solutions to areas for development.</li> </ol>
<b>Pass</b>	<p>To achieve a <b>pass</b>, all learners should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show some good, basic compositional skills, which demonstrate some awareness of the requirements of a specific musical style, displaying some of the characteristics of that style. The composition would be a relatively convincing representation of the style at this at this level. They display an ability to work competently within the specifics of the brief and display good time management skills.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate basic abilities at representing the compositions through notation, which may take the form of graphic notation or chord charts.</li> <li>3. Describe strengths and areas for development showing a basic understanding of their progress and developmental areas.</li> </ol>
<b>Unclassified</b>	<p>A learner <b>not</b> on course to achieve this unit might evidence the majority of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show some basic compositional skills that do not represent a style, which demonstrate a lack of awareness of the requirements of a specific musical style, they may display fragments of the characteristics of that style but not enough to be convincing. They are unable to work</li> </ol>

	<p>competently within the specifics of the brief and display good time management skills.</p> <p>2. Demonstrate little or no abilities at representing the arrangements through notation, the notation provided may be incorrect or incoherent in relationship to the music provided.</p> <p>3. Fail to describe either strengths and areas for development or both showing no understanding of personal progress or goals progress</p>
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Assessment Framework

### Learning Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

1. Demonstrate skills to create a finished musical work in a defined style, evaluating the results and own skill development

### Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1 Working alone, compose a song or an instrumental piece of a minimum of two and a half and a maximum of three minutes duration reflective of a defined musical style suggested by the tutor using at least three of the following:
  - a. rhythm track;
  - b. bass line;
  - c. harmonic progression
  - d. melody;
  - e. lyrics
- 1.2 Describe the layout of the composed piece using either:
  - b. graphic diagrams;
  - c. chord charts;
  - d. stave notation;
  - e. annotated sequencer screen shots
  - f. or a combination of the above, identifying the structural and instrumental arrangement.
- 2.1 Describe how the composition created in 1.1 relates to the specified criteria and highlight strengths and areas for development.