

Unit Code: 205ta

Unit Title: Composing Music – Internal Optional

Level: 2

TQT/GLH: 80/60

Credit Value: 8

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 outcomes 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 or 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 and rest values
- Bar lines and 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 of 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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learner will be able to:

- 1 Demonstrate skills to create a finished musical work in a defined style
- 2 Reflect on finished work and consider strengths and areas for 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 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:
 - a. Graphic diagrams
 - b. Chord charts
 - c. Stave notation
 - d. Annotated sequencer screen shots
 - e. A combination of the above, identifying the structural and instrumental arrangement
- 2.1** Evaluate the success of the composition in relation to the specified criteria and highlight strengths and areas for development

GRADING CRITERIA

Unclassified

A learner not on course to achieve this unit might evidence a significant number of the following:

- 11** Insufficient ability to work alone to compose a song or an instrumental piece of a minimum of two and a half minutes duration, reflective of a defined musical style suggested by the tutor, omitting any or all of the following:
 - a. Rhythm track
 - b. Bass line
 - c. Harmonic progression
 - d. Melody
 - e. Lyrics
- 12** Insufficient ability to describe the layout of the composed piece using either:
 - a. Graphic diagrams
 - b. Chord charts
 - c. Stave notation
 - d. Annotated sequencer screen shots
 - e. A combination of the above, identifying the structural and instrumental arrangement
- 2.1** Insufficient ability to evaluate the composition in relation to the specified criteria and highlight strengths and areas for development

Pass

To achieve a pass, all learners must:

- 11** Working alone, compose a song or an instrumental piece of a minimum of two and a half 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

- 12** Describe the layout of the composed piece using either:
- Graphic diagrams
 - Chord charts
 - Stave notation
 - Annotated sequencer screen shots
 - A combination of the above, identifying the structural and instrumental arrangement
- 2.1** Evaluate the composition in relation to the specified criteria and highlight strengths and areas for development

Merit

To achieve a merit, learners should:

- 11** Working alone, show well-developed skills in composing a song or an instrumental piece of a minimum of two and a half minutes duration, reflective of a defined musical style suggested by the tutor, using at least three of the following:
- Rhythm track
 - Bass line
 - Harmonic progression
 - Melody
 - Lyrics
- 12** Describe clearly and in detail the layout of the composed piece using either:
- Graphic diagrams
 - Chord charts
 - Stave notation
 - Annotated sequencer screen shots
 - A combination of the above, identifying the structural and instrumental arrangement
- 2.1** Provide a clear and detailed evaluation of how the composition created in 1.1 relates to the specified criteria and highlight strengths and areas for development

Distinction

To achieve a distinction, learners should:

- 11** Working alone, compose a highly engaging song or an instrumental piece of a minimum of two and a half minutes duration, reflective of a defined musical style suggested by the tutor, using at least three of the following:
- Rhythm track
 - Bass line
 - Harmonic progression
 - Melody
 - Lyrics
- 12** Comprehensively describe the layout of the composed piece using either:
- Graphic diagrams
 - Chord charts
 - Stave notation
 - Annotated sequencer screen shots
 - A combination of the above, identifying the structural and instrumental arrangement
- 2.1** Comprehensively evaluate how the composition created in 1.1 relates to the specified criteria and highlight strengths and areas for development

RECOMMENDED EVIDENCE

*This unit will be evidenced through the following; **written work, video presentation, blog, vlog or podcast**. Learners are not limited to a single submission type and may wish to use different methods of evidence dependent on their suitability to each learning outcome. Learners may use multiple evidence methods for the same learning outcome if they wish but should clearly state the learning outcome/assessment criteria they are addressing with their work.*

Learning Outcome 1 – Demonstrate skills to create a finished musical work in a defined style

Evidence for this Learning outcome may be presented as; written work, video presentation, blog or vlog in addition to the audio file

Total written evidence for this learning outcome should not exceed 1000 words

Total audio/visual evidence for this learning outcome should not exceed 8 minutes (this is not inclusive of the composition audio)

Learning Outcome 2 – Reflect on finished work and consider strengths and areas for development

Evidence for this learning outcome may be presented as; written work, video presentation, blog or vlog

Total written evidence for this learning outcome should not exceed 800 words

Total audio/visual evidence for this learning outcome should not exceed 6 minutes

Practical

The composition must fall between 2.5 – 5 minutes in length

The maximum evidence is stated in 'Recommended Evidence' in order to prevent learners from preparing and submitting work which is surplus to the requirements of the qualification. The minimum requirement for evidence is whatever is necessary for the individual learner to demonstrate all assessment criteria (in whichever stated, appropriate format) as long as the volume of work does not exceed the stated maximum. The maximum requirement should not be confused for a minimum requirement. Marks are awarded purely for how effectively the learner has met all assessment criteria within the maximum requirement boundary.

N.B. RSL advises that for each learning outcome a 20% buffer on exceeding the stated maximum limits should be used. Any evidence that exceeds this 20% should not to be considered during grading.

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.

To evidence this unit, it is recommended that learners produce the following:

- Audio representations of the composition
- Description of layout of the composed piece including where appropriate a score; chart; diagrams; screen shots
- Evaluation

SUGGESTED DELIVERY IDEAS

Delivery should be a mixture of classroom 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 group activities 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 can, however, 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 a '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

GLOSSARY

Compose	An original musical creation
Reflective	How the composition emulates the given style (a distinctive Motown drum beat? distorted rock guitar, root/5 th /octave funk bass)
Musical style	The style or genre of music (Blues, Rap, Country are 3 examples of different musical styles)
Rhythm Track	A regular repeated pattern
Bass line	The lowest frequency notes in the composition
Harmonic progression	The chord changes that move to form the harmonic characteristic of the composition
Melody	A series of notes
Lyrics	Written words that are sung, spoken, or otherwise performed within the composition
Graphic diagrams	Musical diagrams that display the structure of the composition or the musical characteristics
Chord charts	Usually written on stave but with chords over bars with some indication of rhythm. Melody or Bass line not included
Stave notation	A sequence of notes or hits written on stave in treble, bass, or drum clef
Structural arrangement	Evidence of the compositions structure (I-V-IV progression, Verse-chorus-verse, etc)
Instrumental arrangement	Evidence of the instrumental arrangement (chord charts, stave notation)