

# Sounding The Somme – Somme Unseen

## Lesson Plan

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### 1. Lesson 1 - Introduction to Film Music

Explain to pupils what the project is about and refer to any previous work produced from other Sounding the Somme projects. You may already have some musical material from the Kit Bag and Power of Pipes projects to use here.

#### Discussion – Popular Films and Music

Ask pupils to think of a favourite or memorable film and write a shortlist of three on the whiteboard – preferably famous films that all (or most) pupils will have heard of. Ask pupils why they like these films and discuss the answers.

Then ask pupils to think of films that they like that have a particularly memorable music score (these might be the same as the previous list – and that is ok). Write a shortlist list of three on the whiteboard.

Find YouTube sound only clips of these films that illustrate the main music theme. It is best if there are no images when listening to the music as that can distort how we listen. Play each sound clip to the class and ask the pupils to make a note of the following:

- What does the music tell you about the film's style, theme, content or era?
- How does the music convey this?
- Are there any music genres, styles or instruments used to create a specific theme or effect?
- Are there any motifs, rhythmic or melodic effects that stand out?
- How does the music make you feel?

Share and discuss the answers with the class and make notes about the music next to each film on the whiteboard.

#### Listening Exercise – Famous Film Scores

Play your pupils the following film music clips (they probably won't have selected these earlier in the lesson) and ask them to write notes once again on each based the questions above.

- The Good the Bad and the Ugly**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_zeiKrRTuk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_zeiKrRTuk)
- Psycho**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Me-VhCgjeHo>
- E.T.**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O15x-B8PgeE>

Share and discuss the answers. Are there any differences in the responses when you don't know the film first? Do you listen differently and hear things differently?

#### The Function of Film Music

Using the **Fact File: The Function of Film Music**, generate a discussion on the whiteboard about the functions of film music and conclude the lesson. If there is time, you could introduce pupils to silent films and the how the function of music is slightly different using the **Fact File: Music in Early Silent Films**.

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## 2. Lesson 2 –The IWM Film Clips

Prepare the **Worksheet Film Clip Timeline Plan** – print out then photocopy onto A3, double sided, 3 copies per pupil.

Prepare or download the three **Imperial War Museums film clips** from the website.

Recap on the previous lesson and the function of music in films.

Explain to pupils that they are now going to write some music to accompany one of three silent films clips filmed in 1916-17 on the Western Front. These clips have been supplied to us directly from the Imperial War Museums specially for this project. When the compositions are finished, the music will be recorded (live or sampled and dubbed onto the film) and pupils will write a short description of what they have written and why.

### Watching Exercise

Play one of the **Imperial War Museums film clips** to the pupils and ask them to watch it really carefully. At the end, discuss what they saw on screen as a group, as different pupils will have probably noticed completely different things. Also try to talk about feelings and emotions in response to the clips in addition to the action on screen.

Repeat this exercise with the remaining two clips.

Give out three copies of the **Film Clip Timeline Plan** to each pupil. Remind students about the role of music in films from the previous lesson.

Play the clips again one after the other and ask student to start making their own notes on the table for each clip. Explain to pupils at the end of this viewing, they will need to make a decision about which film they want to write music for.

### Planning Exercise

Split the class into pre-set composing groups or three groups - one for each film as required. See the **Notes for Teachers** for advice here.

Ask the pupils to spend the rest of the lesson watching the clips in smaller groups on iPads or tablets, discussing them in detail, making notes, and agreeing on the instrumentation for the compositions. This can be done individually, in composing groups or groups of pupils composing for the same film as desired.

#### OPTIONAL

Set a homework task and ask pupils to watch the films a few time between this lesson and the next to really familiarise themselves with the material and to complete their Timeline and Plan resource sheet.

You can also print out copies of the **Hand Out: Film Composer Laura Rossi Q&A** for pupils to read in their own time.

### 3. Lesson 3 – Composing

Prepare the **Hand Out: Top Tips from Laura** for this lesson.

Recap on the previous lesson, organise the class into appropriate working groups and remind pupils of where they got to with their film composition plans. Explain that during this lesson pupils will start to compose music for their chosen silent film clip. This will take the whole lesson and teachers will need to help and guide pupils through this process.

The methods of composition to be used for this task are entirely up to you and should reflect how your school normally teaches composition. This could be using keyboards/pianos, computer facilities (Logic, Cubase or Sibelius) or other methods.

#### Composing Ideas

If working with younger pupils, or those that might need some help and inspiration, here are some ideas for getting started:

- Watch a scene from the film clip with a plain piece of paper in front of you and a pencil. Without looking down, draw a continuous line that reflects the action on screen. At the end of the scene, take a look at what you've drawn. Use some of the contours of the line to transfer to a musical melodic idea.
- Repeat the exercise: this time you can take the pencil off the paper, but try to draw or reflect the scenery or atmosphere of the film. Once again, try not to look down but concentrate on what you are seeing rather than create perfect piece of art. This one will probably be more abstract, but might lend itself well to a motif or ostinato that you could use to create texture.
- Pick out some of your key objectives from the Timeline Plan table and put the words together in different orders, add words to create a phrase, or even a poem, to inspire you.

Ask pupils to try to come up with a simple musical theme at the start of the process; you can then change that theme in the following ways to give the music a different mood or emotion:

- Invert it
- Distort it
- Make the key minor (or major if originally minor)
- Change the articulation
- Change the metre/time signature
- Repeat the theme at a different interval and also apply any of the above

Here some musical ideas for specific types of scenes:

- Marching soldiers – a jaunty musical march
- Scenes of devastation – reflective music
- Long panning landscape shots – minimalist music or ostinatos
- Waving soldiers – happy and grand music
- Lone soldier – thin scoring for a few instruments, lonely music with a mournful melody

Advice on developing themes:

Try to make your music flow between different themes. Remember that themes in film music are often repeated so use the list above to explore different way to change your theme.

You don't necessarily need to write loads of different melodies, motifs or ideas, you could develop just a couple of ideas through the piece. You may want to have two different sections of ideas and then come back to the original melody using a tertiary form.

Remember, having repeated music can also help the audience to connect with the images by being able to latch on to, and feel connected to, a specific melody that they have already heard.

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Keep on referring to your Timeline Plan sheet and continue to watch the film clip as you go through the composing phase if desired.

#### 4. Lesson 4 – Composing Continued

During this week of this project, pupils should continue to compose their music.

#### 5. Lesson 5 – Syncing music with Film

Explain to pupils that during this lesson they should be finishing off the musical material and preparing it to perform with the film ready for the recording.

If pupils have been working on computers, they should start to sync the music with the film. Refer back to the **Hand Out: Top Tips from Laura** for help with this.

If pupils are composing away from the computer, they should time the piece so that it matches the action on the screen and make adjustments where necessary.

Pupils should also prepare scores and parts during this lesson, either by hand or using Sibelius, and write up a short description of what they have written and why.

#### 6. Lesson 6 – Completing and watching

Pupils can present their final scores either using any of the below methods:

- From Sibelius using its pre-existing sampled sounds to play the score.
- Logic (or similar software programme) with pre-existing samples of each of the instruments.
- A live recording, based on a click track (a simple metronome beat) prepared by the pupil for the musicians to listen to (so they can keep in sync with the film), to enable them to perform their music in sync with the film

Pupils may want to do a combination of the above.

Pupils could also play their scores or improvise the music and record the music live whilst they keep in sync by watching the film whilst playing.

You may want to then share work created across the school, at a Somme100 FILM performance, or/and platformed on our project website!