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BEING CREATIVE with CLASSROOM COMPOSING

Spring 2011



PLAN for this SESSION

- Introduction
- Warm-ups
- Musical Concepts and Musical Development
- Classroom Composing
- Composing Activity for Junior Cycle students
- Minimalism Skills Set (including Rhythm Task)
- Composing Activity for Senior Cycle students
- Learning Outcomes and Transferability

MUSICAL CONCEPTS

We can compose music in a ***worthwhile*** and ***original*** way

... when we use these musical concepts and our imagination.



MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT

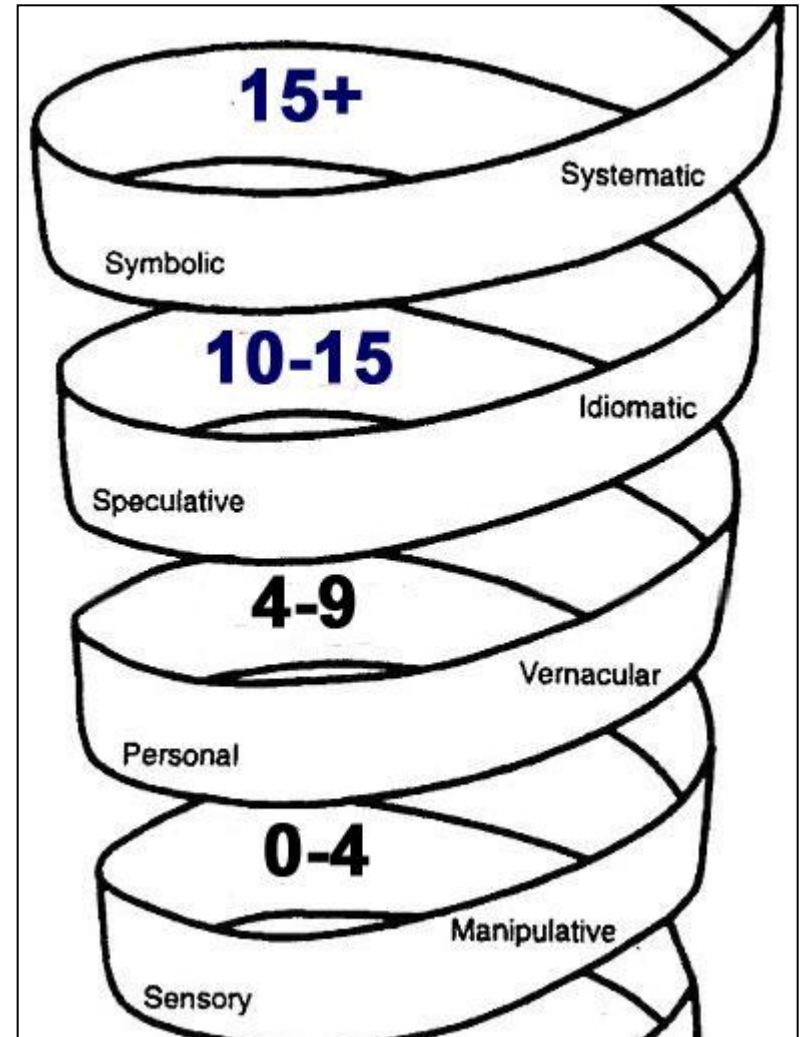
15+
10-15
4-9
0-4

Value

Form

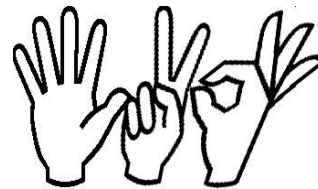
Expression

Materials



CLASSROOM COMPOSING

- Composing and 'classroom composing'
- Learning
- Tools
- Body percussion
- Graphical scores

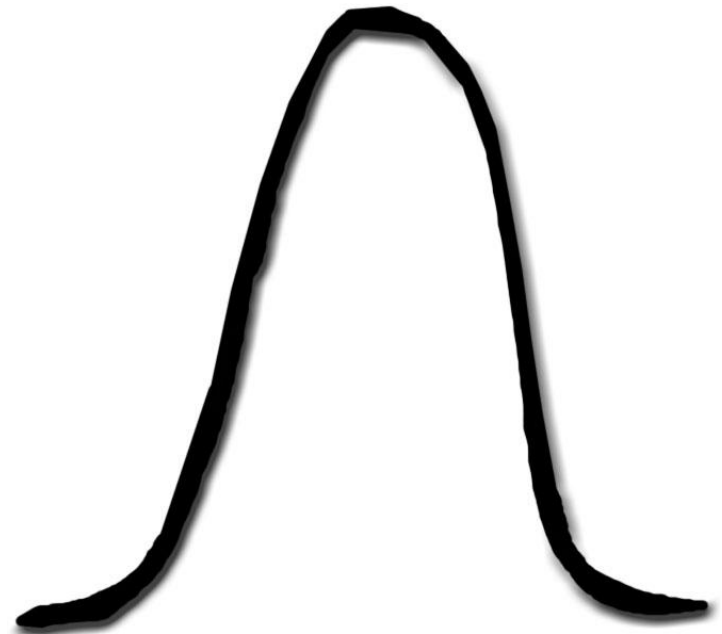


SCORE READING and WRITING

UNLIMITED

“Play a sound with the certainty that you have an infinite amount of time and space.”

(Stockhausen, 1968)



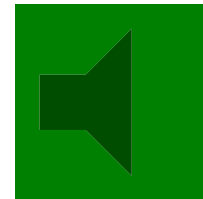
(for ensemble)

BODY PERCUSSION: VIDEO



(Perpetuum Jazzile: *Toto in Africa* – YouTube)

VOCAL SOUNDS: TRAIN (1)



(*'Voiceworks'* - Peter Hunt)

Start slow - gradually increase tempo

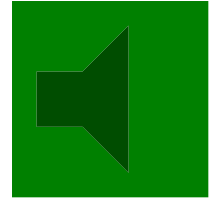
Ssshoooo Ssshoooo

Tch! Tch! Tch! Tch!

Tff Tff Tff Tff Tff Tff Tff Tff

Sssss - Hhaaa - - Sssss - Hhaaa

VOCAL SOUNDS: TRAIN (2)



The musical score consists of four staves, each with a treble clef and a repeat sign at the beginning and end. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets indicated by a '3' over a group of notes. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Staff 1: Ti ti-ka, Ti ti-ka, Ti ti-ka, Ti ti-ka Ti ti-ka, Ti ti-ka, Ti ti-ka, Ti ti-ka

Staff 2: Tfff chi-ka - ta, Tfff chi-ka - ta, (with triplets over the 'ka' in each phrase)

Staff 3: Tuh-tuh Tuh-tuh Tuh-tuh Tuh-tuh

Staff 4: chi - pa, chi - chi - pa, chi chi - pa, chi - chi - pa, chi

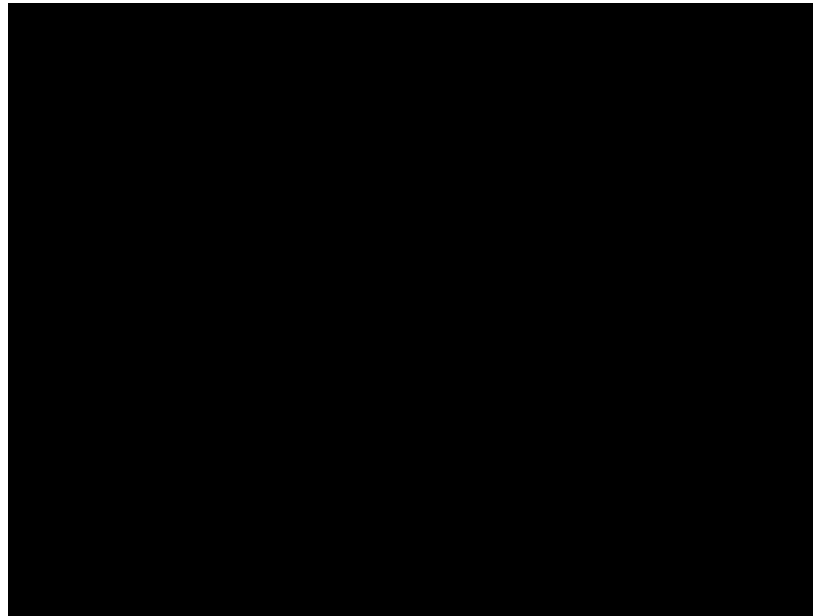
SOUND and STRUCTURE

Stimuli for classroom composing include

- Story
- Mood
- Form
- Motif
- Timbres
- Still Images or Video
- Sounds (e.g. scale, note row, chords)



PENTATONIC SCALE: VIDEO



(Bobby McFerrin – www.WorldScienceFestival.com – YouTube)

PENTATONIC FIGURE

'black notes'

The image displays two staves of musical notation for a pentatonic figure in D major, 4/4 time. The first staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings (r', d', l) and accents. The second staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings (l, s, m) and accents.

Staff 1: r' r' r' d' d' l l d' r' r' r' d' d' l l d'

Staff 2: l l l s s m m s l l l l s s s m m s

PENTATONIC FIGURE with HARMONY

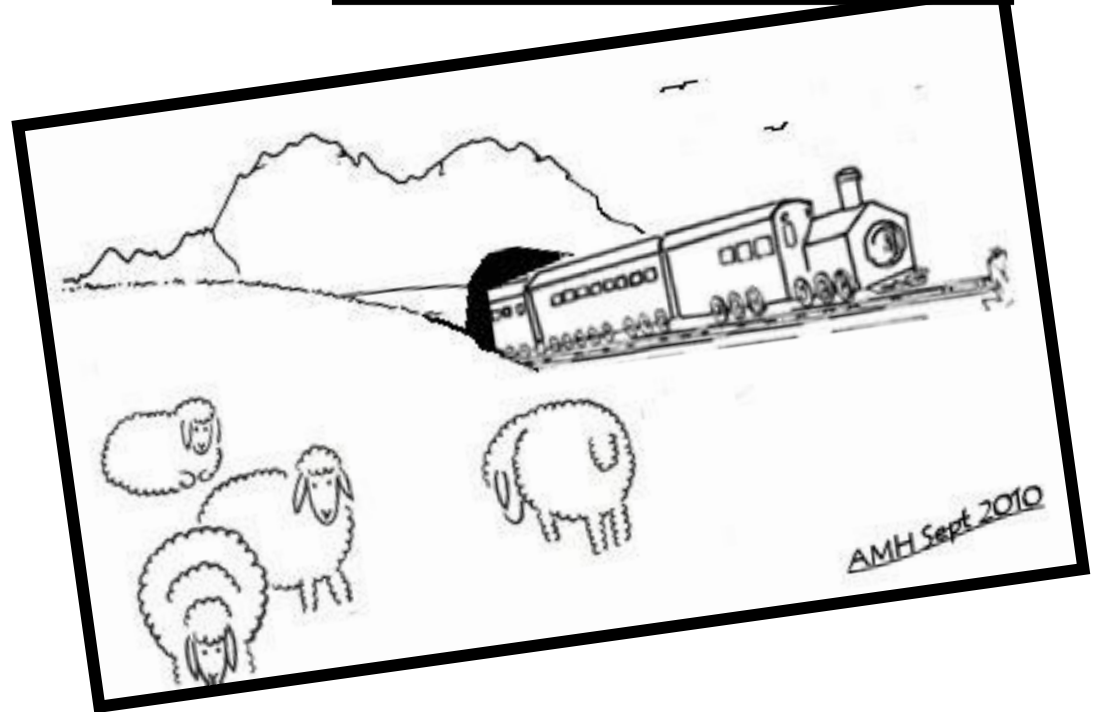
First system of musical notation for the Pentatonic Figure with Harmony exercise. The notation includes two staves (treble and bass clef) in 4/4 time, featuring a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody in the upper staff uses notes G#4, A4, B4, C#5, and D5. The accompaniment in the lower staff uses notes G#3, A3, B3, C#4, and D4. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Articulation marks include accents (r', d'), slurs (l), and staccato (s).

Second system of musical notation for the Pentatonic Figure with Harmony exercise. The notation continues the two-staff format in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps. The melody and accompaniment patterns are continued with specific fingerings and articulation marks.

COMPOSING ACTIVITY at JUNIOR CYCLE

Train journey in China

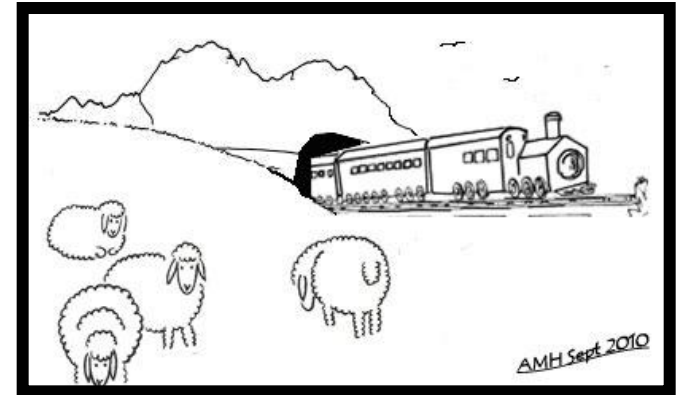
- Rhythms
- Timbres
- Tempo
- Dynamics
- Texture
- Structure
- Pentatonic Scale
- Graphic Score



(The score is on the CD)

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Listen to *Little Train of the Caipira* by Villa-Lobos



Invent notation for complex rhythms and unusual timbral effects. Use a **KEY** to explain the symbols.



TOOLS for JUNIOR COMPOSING

1. Use unifying devices such as a rhythmic ostinato, a drone or a recurring melodic motif.
2. Include silence and a climax.
3. Make a slide show or silent video and compose an accompanying sound score, using musical connections.
4. A wooden agogo can depict time.
5. Lower notes and chords on the piano can create a mood of foreboding.

- *Haunted House*
- *Shipwreck*
- *Foxhunt*
- *Balloon trip*
- *Noah and the Ark*
- *Night and Day*
- *The Storm*
- *ABA*

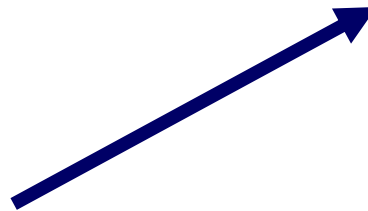
MINIMALIST MUSIC: VIDEO



(Steve Reich: *Music for 18 Musicians* - YouTube)

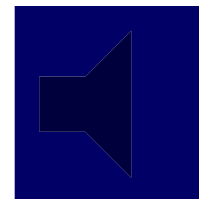
MINIMALIST SKILL SET

- Augmentation
- Diminution
- Addition
- Subtraction
- Ostinato
- Gradual transformation
- Rhythmic displacement



bars
cars
cart
mart
malt
mall
ball
bell
belt
bent
lent
lint
line
lone
tone
tune

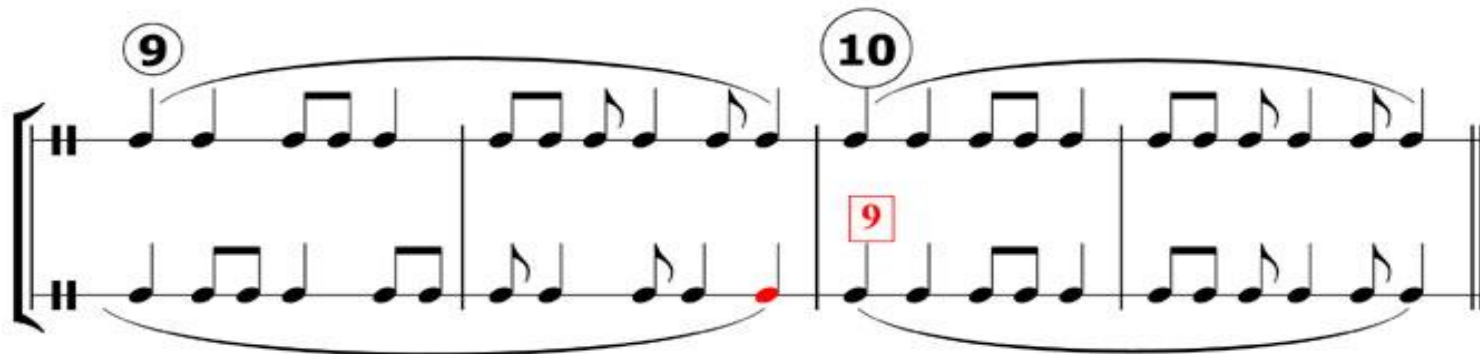
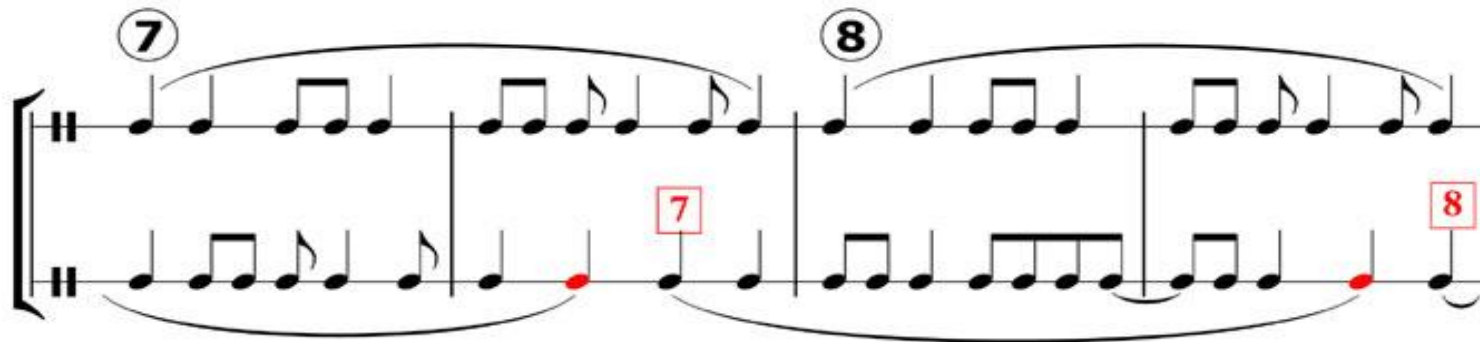
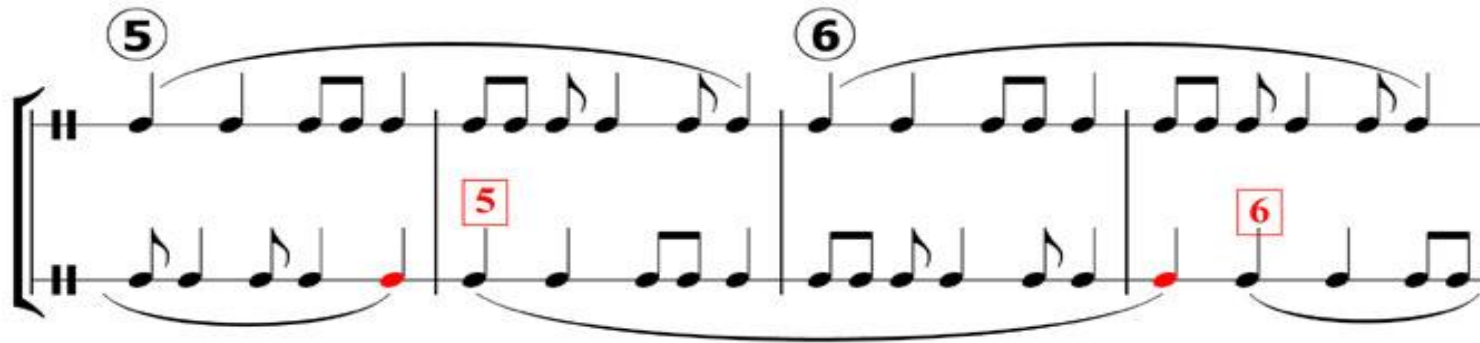
RHYTHMIC DISPLACEMENT TASK



The image displays musical notation for a rhythmic displacement task in 4/4 time. It consists of two systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system is marked 'FC' and the bottom staff is marked '+1'. Both staves contain a sequence of eighth notes. In the first system, the top staff has a circled '1' above the first measure and a circled '2' above the second measure. The bottom staff has a red square with the number '1' above the first measure and a red square with the number '2' above the second measure. In the second system, the top staff has a circled '3' above the first measure and a circled '4' above the second measure. The bottom staff has a red square with the number '3' above the first measure and a red square with the number '4' above the second measure. Red dots are placed on the eighth notes in the bottom staff of each system, corresponding to the red numbers. Brackets are used to group the notes in each system.

continued...

RHYTHMIC DISPLACEMENT (contd.)



COMPOSING ACTIVITY at SENIOR CYCLE

Rondo form: ABACADA...

A: *Spaceship*

B: *The Planet of Mirrors*

C: *The Planet of War*

D: *The Planet of Gradual Change*

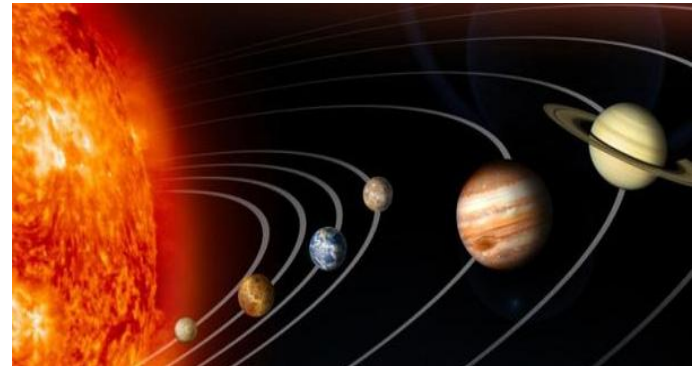
E: *The Planet of Water*

F: *The Planet of Doom*

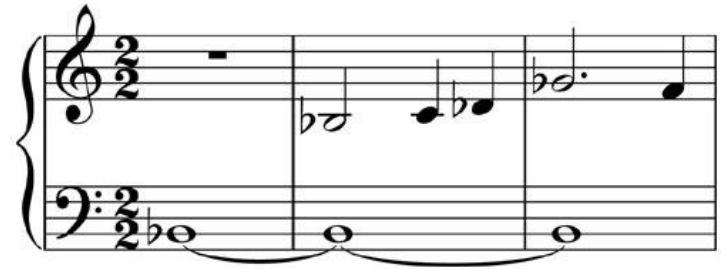
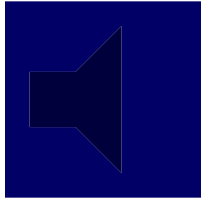
G: *The Planet of Voices*

H: *The Planet of Extremes*

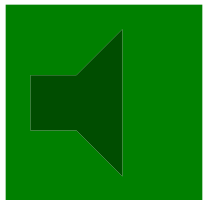
Journey in Space



CREATING MOODS: AUDIO EXAMPLES



Elfman – *Batman Returns* (Pedal/Dynamics/Texture /Pace /Timbres)

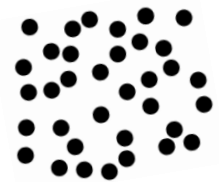


Debussy – *Voiles*

(Whole-tone scale)

TOOLS for SENIOR COMPOSING

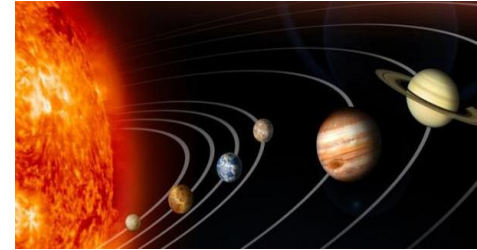
- Retrograde
- Whole-tone scale e.g. C D E F# G# A# B#
- Ascending and Descending Glissandi
- Rhythmic, Melodic and Harmonic Ostinati
- Parallel diminished 7th chords
- Antiphonal Rhythmic Dialogue
- Tinkly and Military Timbres
- Moods (e.g. Suspense, Gloom)
- Improvisation (over a set of chords)
- Note rows



FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

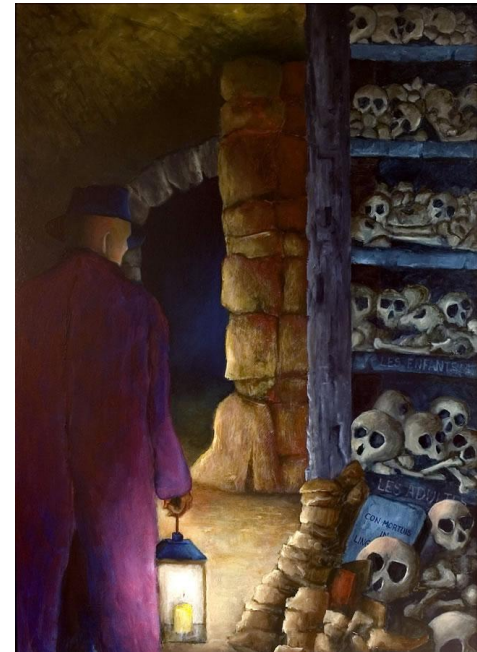
(More images on CD)

Listen to Holst's *Planets*



Adapt the Rondo idea to different scenarios

Use Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* as a stimulus



LEARNING OUTCOMES & TRANSFERABILITY

- Listening, Performing and Composing
- Music as organised sound
- Musical concepts
- Links to set works and general listening
- Contemporary composers
- Group work and decision-making
- Inclusion, integration, differentiation
- Score reading and writing
- The Composing Elective at LC
- **NB! MUSICAL LEARNING**



HAPPY CLASSROOM COMPOSING!

Explore the resources on the accompanying CD



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