Composition Workshop

Mark Armstrong
This session will explore the relevance of composition to instrumental and class teaching, and how to integrate composition into lessons from the very beginning. Composing can be creative and exciting but also daunting. During the session we’ll focus on ways to build confidence in composition, with practical tips on how to encourage effective use of texture, structure, tonality and rhythm.
## Musical Elements

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MELODY
Modes in Musical Culture

Use of inherent and acquired musical qualities to create expression

Position of tritone in mode an important factor

Modes work with other musical elements to create expression
Modes from Major Scales
Lydian – ‘Awe and Wonder’

Prelude à L’Aprés-Midi d’un Faune (Debussy)
Lydian in Film Music

E.T. main theme approx 3.20

Slowly

Solo Trumpet

Harmony

E.T. (John Williams)
Ionian (major): Magnificent/Reassuring

Reassuring Cat Food:

Magnificent Super-Hero
Mixolydian: Mysterious but want to dance

She Moved Through the Fair opening:

My own love said to me "My mother won't mind,

And my father won't slight thee for your lack of kind"

Don't Stop 'Till You Get Enough groove:

Folk song vs disco
Dorian: Epic & Rustic but Jazzy

Rustic Dorian Greensleeves:

"Mock Tudor" Greensleeves:
Aolian (why do I have to learn harmonic and melodic minor scales?)

Melodic Minor:

Beethoven: Symphony no. 7
2nd Movement:

Dowland: "Flow My Tears"

Harmonic Minor:

Flow my tears, Flow...
Phrygian/Locrian: dark and mysterious

• Scary tritone
• Flattened 2nd e.g. Jaws
• Spanish Phrygian – Arab/Maghreb origins
• Carmen/Flamenco
Modal ideas for practise

Modal Gym
A light-to-dark scale workout with apologies to Satie
MARK ARMSTRONG

1. LYDIAN

2. IONIAN (MAJOR)

3. MIXOLYDIAN

4. DORIAN
RHYTHM
Rhythm: applying template

Rhythmic Template: balance of repetition and development

Fig. A
Fig. B
Fig. C (B developed)
Fig. A recap.

1. Root and 2nd

2. Root, 2nd, 3rd

3. Tetratonic

4. Pentatonic

5. Major
Placement and displacement

Position of strong and weak beats affects melodic shape

Jazz uses this to create rhythmic cadence
HARMONY
Major ‘four chord trick’

1. "I Got Rhythm" - basic triads

2. "I Got Rhythm" - inversions for better voice leading

3. "I Got Rhythm" - mixing triads for richer harmony
Minor example

1. "Wonderwall" - basic triads

2. "Wonderwall" - inversions for better voice leading

3. "Wonderwall" - mixing triads for richer harmony

F/D  Dm7  Am/F  Fmaj7  Em/C  Cmaj7  G
Triads from different keys

1. "Coastbound" - triads/bass notes
   Gm\(^7\)  Am\(^7\)  C\(^7\)(sus4)  E\(^b9\)(sus4)  F\(^9\)(sus4)

   Richness created by abrupt changes of tonality & minor 3rd root movement but held together by F "pivot note"

2. "Giant Steps" - upward movement of line adds tension/excitement into resolution
Thank you

Any questions?