

New Music Alive!

Composition Resources for the Classroom

*Devised by the Contemporary Music Centre
in conjunction with Peter Moran*



Introduction

New Music Alive is a set of eight lesson plans designed as a practical and fun introduction to the principles of music composition.

For many students, a composer is a man (it's usually a man!) in a long grey wig who is very old and very dead. So how can we get across the idea that a composer can be a man or a woman living in their community who looks just like anyone else? That the music of the bands and groups which are such an important part of our students' worlds has, in fact, all been 'composed' by someone? That they too can be a composer if they want to?

New Music Alive aims to raise awareness of what it really means to be a composer. Using warm-ups, games, listening material and visual resources, students are engaged from the outset in practical classroom activities designed to develop their ability to hear and analyse sounds. In a structured sequence, they learn how to use the basic building blocks of music to devise and perform their own compositions. They are also introduced to the sounds and ideas behind contemporary music.

Curriculum Resources

These composition resources are designed to complement the Primary School Curriculum strands of 'Listening and Responding', 'Composing', and 'Performing' for fifth and sixth classes. They have also been used successfully with secondary school students up to Transition Year.

Each of the lesson plans, which are intended for teacher use, offers a timed sequence of activities for the class, with a supplementary sheet providing additional notes and suggestions. While the lessons are self-contained and may be taught individually, students will gain much more benefit and enjoyment from working through the whole set in sequence, with no more than a week's interval between each session.

Having completed the set of eight lessons, students will have:

- Explored and analysed sounds in their environment;
- Explored the sounds that their own speaking and singing voices can make;
- Improvised with their voices, bodies and a range of musical instruments;
- Listened and responded to a range of excerpts from contemporary compositions;
- Gained an understanding of the concepts of pitch, rhythm, texture, structure, and other key elements of music;
- Learned how to work as a team in developing and communicating their musical ideas;
- Composed and notated their own musical compositions;
- Performed and recorded their compositions with confidence;
- Developed an awareness of modern music and of how composers write music.

Listening

- Links to the audio samples that illustrate these worksheets can be found on the Contemporary Music Centre's web site.
- You can also search web sites like YouTube, LastFM and MySpace for the artist and work, e.g. Captain Beefheart: *Electricity*.
- You can explore the music of contemporary Irish composers on the Contemporary Music Centre's web site.
- You can explore classical music of all kinds on the Naxos.com web site, where a free subscription entitles you to listen to 25% of any piece in their CD catalogue.

Feedback

The Contemporary Music Centre welcomes feedback from teachers and examples of work created by students using this material. The best graphic scores and recordings will be added to the CMC web site. Please contact newmusicalive@cmc.ie or telephone 01-673 1922 if you would like to submit samples of classroom work.

New Music Alive!

New Music Alive! is an initiative of the Contemporary Music Centre made possible by funding from Dublin City Council Arts Grants. It was developed in 2008-09 in conjunction with composer and facilitator Peter Moran.

Dublin-born **Peter Moran** is a composer and experienced workshop facilitator, currently musical director of CoMA Yorkshire (Contemporary Music-making for Amateurs). He is completing a PhD in Composition at York University in England.

Our sincere thanks to: the principals, teachers and students of Scoil Chaitríona, Baggot Street, Dublin 2 and St Enda's National School, Whitefriar Street, Dublin 2, who were the enthusiastic pioneers of this project; to Dr Patricia Flynn, Music Department, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, for her valuable advice; and to Peter Moran for his energy, flair and enthusiasm.



The Contemporary Music Centre

The Contemporary Music Centre (CMC) is Ireland's national archive and promotion agency for new music, operating on an all-Ireland basis. The Centre is used, nationally and internationally, by performers, composers, promoters, educators, students and members of the public interested in finding out more about music in Ireland. It is funded by The Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Culture Ireland, and others.

www.cmc.ie

If you have any questions, please email us at newmusicalive@cmc.ie.



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