

# New Music Alive!

## Lesson Three

### Graphic Scores

**Strand:** *Composing*

**Strand Units:** *Improvising and creating*

**Curriculum Objectives:**

- invent and perform pieces that show an increasing awareness and control of musical elements
- listen to his/her own compositions and the compositions of others and evaluate
- perform with increasing understanding and control of pitch and extended vocal range
- perform with increasing awareness and control of diction and posture
- perform as a group
- record compositions on electronic media

**Linkage:** *Performing – Literacy, Singing/Playing*

**Concept Development:** *Duration, structure, timbre, texture*

**Additional Skills:** Collaborating as a group on a single artistic goal

#### Warm-Up: *Singing Shapes*

5 mins

- ▶ Slowly trace a wavy line up and down in the air with your finger, and follow it with your voice, like a siren.
- ▶ Now let your voice leap back and forth from a high note to a low note, tracing the zigzag shape in the air.
- ▶ Have half the class sing the zigzag shape while the other half sing the wavy line. Then swap.

#### Reading Music: *Stripsody*

10 mins

- ▶ 📄 Give each student in the class a copy of *The Beano Game*, which can be printed from the CMC web site.
- ▶ Ask the class to demonstrate what the first picture sounds like, then the second, etc.
- ▶ Every time a new sound is added, sing the piece again from the beginning.  
When two sounds appear on the page, one above the other, should they be sung one after another?  
Or how could we arrange to sing both at the same time?

#### Interpretation and Performance

10 mins

*You can create your own interpretation of the piece using three simple compositional tools: silence, repetition and omission.*

- Should the music be played continuously from start to finish, or would you like to have any gaps in it?
- If so, where would you like to put your silences? How many and for how long?
- Are there any sounds that you would like to use more than once? Which ones and where?
- Are there any sounds you would like to leave out of the piece altogether?

Every time a change is made, sing the piece again from the beginning.

#### Team Compositions

15 mins

- ▶ Divide the class into teams of 3-5 students.  
Let each team compose their own interpretation of the piece, using ideas from the last exercise. Ask the same questions again.
- ▶ Some might like to add their own sound effects. In this sample picture, the students added 'boing' or 'wam' leading up to the 'bang' at the end of their piece.  
Visit each table to monitor their progress and offer suggestions if needed.  
Remember the three simple compositional tools above.
- ▶ When everyone has finished, let each team perform their work to the rest of the class.



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## Supplementary Notes

### Warm-Up: *Singing Shapes*

Warm-ups are always good for the children's voices and self-confidence. In this game they can try out some of their own ideas by adding new shapes, like dots or a criss-cross. Try going faster and slower at different times too.

### Reading Music

A "Graphic Score" is music made up of pictures.

Having the children sing back over their work each time they add a new sound will help develop musical memory and confidence in performing.

- ◀ Listen to a recording on the CMC web site of one group of students' interpretation of a page from *Stripsody*, a graphic score by the famous singer Cathy Berberian.  
In this recording the students sing together at different volumes, adding their own twist by starting loudly and fizzling out quietly for the final 'bang'.

An alternative classroom activity would be to prepare your own page of comic strip sounds by cutting up old copies of the *Beano* and the *Dandy*, for instance, and sticking the sound effects onto a sheet of card.

📄 A ready-made page of comic strip sounds can be printed off from the CMC web site.

### Team Compositions

Try to get a recording of the students' work which can be compiled onto a CD later.