

Music and SFX

Music and sound are vital aspects of our workshops, with a professional musician accompanying each session to create an original score. Having the confidence to use instruments yourself in creative sessions is incredibly useful and comes with practice. Sometimes however you may want to use a specific instrument that you have no great facility on, so the best thing may be to use pre-recorded music and/or sound effects. These can be sourced from many places including the internet, where it is often possible to legitimately download files free of charge.

It is worth recording music and sounds at the highest quality and building up a library, so you can use them over and over again.

Music

The requirements of the music you use will be constantly shifting. Sometimes you may want a very specific piece that complements an activity such as an active, energising piece to support a vigorous activity like building a wall, other times you may simply be looking for passive background music.

Selecting which music to use will involve an element of personal preference, however there are certain things to bear in mind that enable us to both provide participants with a broad range of musical input and help to create the unique attributes of each workshop.

Tips:

- Instrumental music is often more appropriate than vocal pieces. Words tend not to be totally fitting to the action and can also be distracting.
- Longer pieces are useful as time tends to go at a different rate when you are in a session and you may need much more music than you imagine. Constantly changing music can be distracting.
- Looping pieces is very helpful and saves on resourcing time. A five or six minute instrumental piece can often be looped several times without becoming boring.
- As with the environment, resources and costume, we are partly using music to help to make it easier for our participants to enter the world of the specific workshop and to give clues at every opportunity. Using rhythmic music, for example, will help support the idea of a metronomic activity.
- Use recorded music when you can't reproduce the effect you are trying to get across, for example the sounds of a South African gumboot dance.
- Familiar songs such as '*When the boat comes in*' are often useful, for example in fishing at sea activities.
- Consider slowing down the music on whatever device you are using. It is constantly the case that recorded music seems very fast when looked at from the point of view of our participants.
- Traditional music can give context to many culturally specific workshops, for example bands like Blowzabella can often be used in English or French workshops. For activities and workshops set in different parts of the world the traditional music of that area and/or culture is always a good starting point.
- Contemporary minimal music by composers like Steve Reich can be incredibly useful to energise sessions. Pieces such as *Music for Eighteen Musicians* consists of gradually shifting repetitive phrases that are non-prescriptive and can be used in lots of different situations.

- Ambient electronic music is highly varied and much of it is very useful in workshops. It tends to have less dynamic variation and isn't trying to proscribe any particular emotion. As such it can often be used in a variety of settings. Aphex Twin for example has produced a huge body of work that can be used in sessions about being underwater, in space, insect activity or just chilling out.

Each workshop page includes ideas for music and sound effects that could be used as an accompaniment. These are intended as starting-point ideas that might inspire other thoughts.

Sound Effects (SFX)

These can support the specific context of a workshop and help bring an immersive aspect to the sessions. They include:

- Weather effects like wind, rain and thunder
- Bird sounds like seagulls, rainforest birds or the dawn chorus
- Animal sounds like tigers and insects
- Water sounds like waves on shingle, a storm at sea, waterfalls, rivers and dripping water in caves
- Mechanical sounds like engines, cars, clocks and trains
- Human sounds like crowds and street vendors
- Sounds to support the use of a prop, for example a crackling fire

Freesound.org is a wonderful website that provides many different sound effects in an easy to download format.