

# Strike a Chord!

**The Octagon's visionary music project with Artistic Director Charles Hazlewood and in partnership with the Philharmonia Orchestra**



**Resource Pack © John Webb, 2015**

# ***Strike a Chord!*** resource pack | © John Webb

## **Introduction**

Welcome to *Strike a Chord!* – the Octagon’s music education project, created in partnership with the Philharmonia Orchestra, and conductor Charles Hazlewood (*Strike a Chord!*’s Artistic Director), and based around composer Paul Patterson’s setting of Roald Dahl’s *Little Red Riding Hood* for narrator and orchestra, which culminates in a KS2 schools concert at The Octagon in June 2016. This pack outlines the project, taking you through its various elements. The pack (and the INSET which precedes the project’s beginning) will outline ways your class can create their own piece of music inspired by the work of Roald Dahl for performance in your school. The piece could be based around a published poem, or around a poem (or poems) the class creates themselves.

## **About *Strike a Chord!***

*Strike a Chord!* will explore creative music-making in the classroom, offering hundreds of school children the opportunity to experience quality live music in an exciting and engaging way. Inspired by the creative genius of Roald Dahl’s work, a specialist music education leader and a quintet of Philharmonia musicians will work with children to create, compose, and perform their own music, equipping them with the skills to use music confidently, creatively and as a means of self-expression. The project culminates with a schools’ concert at The Octagon on 7 June 2016, featuring the full symphony orchestra’s performance of Paul Patterson’s *Little Red Riding Hood*. Conductor Charles Hazlewood will guide the children on a fun and interactive journey through the Orchestra’s instruments, players and music. INSET training will be provided, equipping teachers with the skills to maximise the workshops and concert experience for their pupils, enhancing their knowledge and appreciation of music, as well as developing personal creativity, expression, confidence and group work skills.

## **Contents**

<b>The Power of Music</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Project Outline</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Developing a piece of music with your class</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Further possibilities and cross curricular links</b> .....	<b>23</b>

# The Power of Music

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What does music do? We listen to it to enhance our moods, we have strong opinions about the music/bands we like or dislike, are moved by certain songs or pieces of music, sing in the shower or car, and are unconsciously influenced by it on TV and film (imagine what they would be like *without* music). Music is such a major part of our lives; it could be argued that humans seem to be pre-programmed to enjoy music and music-making.

If we enjoy music so much, it must be doing something for us, and Dr Susan Hallam's report *The Power of Music* which is a synthesis of a large number of other research reports, attempts to unpick this in an educational context. You can find it through this link:

<http://www.mec.org.uk/news/2015/1/28/benefits-of-music-education-are-reinforced-in-new-publicatio.html>

This briefing sheet outlines the following impacts of music-making:

(Found at <http://www.mec.org.uk/why-music/2015/6/29/why-music-briefing-sheet.html>)

1. *sharpens the brain's early encoding of sound enhancing listening, aural processing skills, aural memory and phonological awareness contributing to the development of literacy skills;*
2. *enhances spatial reasoning which impacts on some mathematical skills;*
3. *has a positive impact on IQ scores even when family background factors are taken into account;*
4. *enhances attainment across all school subjects except sport even after general intelligence is controlled for;*
5. *enhances creativity particularly when the musical activities are creative, e.g. improvisation and composition;*
6. *requires sustained attention, goal-directed behaviour and cognitive flexibility which can transfer to other activities;*
7. *can lead to a sense of accomplishment, enhanced determination and persistence;*
8. *offers the potential for enhancing self-efficacy and self-esteem;*
9. *affects aspirations which enhance motivation particularly in relation to disadvantaged groups of children;*
10. *offers opportunities for increased social inclusion, pro-social behaviour, a sense of belonging and team work;*
11. *can encourage empathy, emotional sensitivity, tolerance and the development of social ethics; and*
12. *enhances psychological well-being, reducing stress and anxiety.*

Musical **composition**, **rehearsal**, **listening** and **performing** all, in various ways, target some of the impacts described in Dr Susan Hallam's research, as you'll experience in *Strike a Chord!!*

### ***Composition***

When composing we are choosing different sounds to see if they work (i.e. if they are appropriate) which is **creative** [Point 5] and also **improves listening skills** [point 1]. When composing in a group, we have to listen to each other's ideas and try them out, which can lead to a **sense of accomplishment** and enhanced **self-efficacy** and **self-esteem** [points 7 and 8]. This also encourages **empathy** [point 11] and **pro-social behaviour** [point 10].



### ***Rehearsal***

In rehearsal we bring the various ideas together and create a complete piece. This can take some time, building the various skills mentioned in *point 6* as well as further listening [point 1] and the **social skills** from *points 10* and *11*. It also builds **persistence** [point 7]. In addition, playing music together **promotes motor co-ordination** in conjunction with listening: we need to make the right sound at the right time in relation to all the other sounds going on. This can be difficult, as it requires individuals to internally regulate themselves physically and mentally: we even have to focus when we're not playing in order to play in the right place. We have to take responsibility for ourselves when playing a piece of music, and not point out the mistakes of others!

### ***Performance***

Performing a finished piece of music can lead to a tremendous sense of success which validates the process the group has been through. It reinforces the various creative and rehearsal aspects mentioned above, particularly *points 7, 8, 10* and *11*. In addition it can affect **aspiration** and **motivation** [point 9].



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**Listening:** In *Strike a Chord!* the children – and the school – will meet and work with professional musicians. This is **inspiring** for children [point 9]. And of course they have to listen to each other whilst creating, rehearsing and performing [point 1], and to control the need to talk or drift off whilst doing so.

The other impacts are less specific [points 2, 3, 4, 12] but occur due to children taking part in regular, quality music-making sessions. So, we hope that *Strike a Chord!* will inspire you to continue to provide these building blocks as an important part of children’s educational entitlement.



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# *Strike a Chord!* | Project Outline

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## PART 1

### **INSET/ Creative music-making teacher training session | 7 December 2015, 9am-12pm**

- *supporting classroom teachers on whole class composition, creating music for a narrated story, inspired by Roald Dahl's texts*

### **In-school assembly 'concert' and workshop week | 4-8 January 2016**

- *Members of the Philharmonia Orchestra will perform a short, interactive, presented assembly to your whole school, playing pieces that showcase their instruments.*
- *This will be followed by a creative workshop with your chosen class, starting them off on their whole-class composition.*

### **Creating the piece with your class | January 2016 onwards**

*Once the Philharmonia has got you underway, you can steadily work on your class compositions. We hope you will want to work towards a performance in your school, inviting friends and parents along.*

*Project Manager, Ellie Velazquez, will be available to support your projects as they progress.*

### **In-school Composer/Conductor visits | dates to be confirmed**

*Visits to your school from Paul Patterson (composer of Little Red Riding Hood) and Charles Hazlewood, who will present and conduct the schools concert in June 2016. They will work with the class who are writing their piece, listening to their works-in-progress and giving some encouraging feedback.*

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## PART 2

### **INSET/Introduction to the concert | 25 April 2016, 9am-12pm**

- *To introduce teachers to the June schools concert at The Octagon and Paul Patterson's Little Red Riding Hood, as well as introduce the audience participation piece to the teachers so that they can then teach their class in preparation for the concert.*

### **Schools Concert, The Octagon, Yeovil | Tuesday 7 June 2016, 1pm**

*Class visit to hear the full Philharmonia Orchestra play Little Red Riding Hood conducted by Charles Hazlewood*

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The in-school concert and the class workshop will occur on the same day during a morning/afternoon in the week commencing 4 January; you should already have received your timetable for the Philharmonia's visit to your school from Ellie Velazquez.

**Concert/whole-school assembly**

A short, 30 minute whole-school assembly will be given by five players from the Philharmonia Orchestra led by amateur John Webb. The concert will be interactive, with opportunities for the children to sing and/or use body percussion. There might even be an occasion where individuals can conduct the musicians, or even the whole school!

The children will also find out about each of the instruments the musicians play, and we'll explore music which has a variety of emotional characters: happy, sad, angry, frustrated, scared, etc. This is the starting point for the composition work the class will be doing: the music for an angry Big Bad Wolf needs to be different to music for a daydreaming Little Red Riding Hood, for example.

**Workshop**

Here we'll start exploring the composition work teachers will be doing with their class. If you've chosen a poem as a starting point we can begin to work on it musically so that you can see a model of the process in action. If not, we'll explore creating music of different emotional characters.

We'll also explore a couple of brief warm-ups which can be used to enhance the class's ability to work together, speed of response and creativity.

# Developing a piece of music with your class

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This section of the resource pack takes you through the stages of a process to create a musical version of a poem.

## A. THE TEXT

Paul Patterson's *Little Red Riding Hood* is an unusual piece because the text is not sung but spoken: the story is narrated with orchestral accompaniment (probably the most famous example of this is Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*).

The text is very rhythmic, so just by speaking it there is a strong sense of pulse, which can be built upon to provide a musical accompaniment. This spoken rhythm is the starting point for creating the musical accompaniment.

### Choosing a published text

When choosing a poem, make sure it has a strong sense of **rhythm** and **pulse** – it will probably rhyme too, which is great.

You are likely to have come across quite a few appropriate Roald Dahl poems which you could use as a starting point. They are not generally available online due to copyright issues, though you can find some at [www.poemhunter.com/roald-dahl/](http://www.poemhunter.com/roald-dahl/)

You can also explore the Roald Dahl website ([www.roalddahl.com](http://www.roalddahl.com)). Though this only has extracts of some of Dahl's work, it might provide a starting point when choosing a poem. There are also other resources, for example lesson plans, which you can investigate.

Here are some books by Roald Dahl which might also be useful –

- ***Revolting Rhymes***, which contains versions of classic stories such as *Cinderella* and *The Three Little Pigs*.
- ***Rhyme Stew***, which has some further classic stories such as *Dick Whittington* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*
- ***Dirty Beasts***, a collection of poems based around different animals.

There are also other authors you could investigate whose poems could be just as good as a starting point:

- Hilaire Belloc's *Cautionary Tales for Children: designed for the Admonition of Children between the ages of 8 and 14*
- Edward Lear's *Nonsense Poems*
- Heinrich Hoffman's *Shock-headed Peter*
- Lewis Carroll's poems from *Alice in Wonderland* (e.g. 'Jabberwocky')





Choose your poems carefully – you may feel some moments are inappropriate for the age group you’re working with, others can be quite long and might need editing. Together with your class, you might like to choose a section of a longer one, or do two short ones (for instance ‘The Lion’ and ‘The Scorpion’ from *Dirty Beasts*).

You might also decide to divide a poem up into shorter sections for smaller groups to work on, meaning a longer poem might work well.

### **Creating your own nonsense poem with the class**

To match Roald Dahl’s wit and rhyme would be a tall order for most of us, but something a bit more accessible would be to create a nonsense rhyme, which might even include some made up words (think of Lewis Carroll’s *Jabberwocky*).

1. To start, let’s create a ridiculous situation using randomly generated words from the class. The children write down different types of words, each one on a separate small piece of paper, for instance:

**Names**  
**Adjectives**  
**Verbs**  
**Animals**  
**Objects**

**Rhymes with ‘-ant’**

**Rhymes with ‘-igh’**

**Rhymes with ‘-ong’**

*Etc. (feel free to choose your own categories!)*

NB some of the rhyming words might not all be spelt the same: *sky* rhymes with *high*; *shoe* with *chew*.

2. All these groups of words are collected together and each type is placed in a separate envelope to be picked out when needed.

3. Start by creating the first line:

[name] [animal] [verb] on/in a/the [object]

4. Pick out a name, an animal, a verb and an object and put them into the phrase. It might turn out as:

Jeremy Caterpillar surrounded the tree

This immediately leads to questions: **what is Jeremy, and how big is he?**

5. So the next line might lead on quite naturally and could be suggested by a class member who's starting to answer these questions:

He was so thin and long

6. The next line might need some help from the random words in the envelopes:

But (object) made him (verb) and (object) made him (verb)

*Which might become:*

But cliffs made him wave and carrots made him wheeze

*The final line:*

Which led to a (adjective) (rhyme with '-ong')

*Becoming:*

Which led to a bluish pong.

The whole poem would read:

Jeremy Caterpillar surrounded the tree  
He was so thin and long  
But cliffs made him wave and carrots made him wheeze  
Which led to a bluish pong.

The next lines could be invented by the class about the carrots and cliffs. The final two lines might be about the effects of the bluish pong on the tree. Take class suggestions, but also pick out words from the bags if it gets stuck. Here's my finished version:

<p>Carrots are bouncy, bloomy, glorious Cliffs were Jeremy's brothers The pong replied to the tree so wide 'I hope there are many others'</p>
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In essence, you are using random words as a starting point and then filling in other places where the group might be a bit stuck. And there's no right or wrong – the more nonsensical the better!

Most importantly – make sure the class' poem has a strong rhythm; this will help the class when they create the music. The rhythm we've used above is of a limerick:

**There was an old man from Dumbree  
Who taught little owls to drink tea  
For he said "to eat mice  
Is not proper nice!"  
That amiable man from Dumbree  
*Edward Lear***

**Jeremy Caterpillar surrounded the tree  
He was so thin and long  
But cliffs made him wave  
And carrots made him wheeze  
Which led to a bluish pong.  
*John Webb***

***A note on metre:*** Metre in music is a recurring pattern of stresses which provides a regular pulse. So, when we repeatedly count **1, 2, 3, 4**, we tend to feel that the '**1**' is stronger and slightly emphasise it. When we're using a poem, there is also a similar sense of emphasis on certain words. In the Edward Lear poem the syllables 'was' and 'bree' in the first line, and 'taught' and 'tea' in the second help to provide a sense of metre. Different patterns of poetry can create different meters. It could be useful to know what the metre is, but it's probably more important just to be aware which words are emphasised more prominently.

## B. CREATING MUSIC FROM YOUR POEM

Before going through a process to create music for the poem, there are four ideas worth bearing in mind:

1. The poem should be read in the performance;
2. The aim is to create appropriate music for the poem – the music matches the actions and feelings in the poem;
3. Don't think that the poem needs to be read non-stop: it's better if there are gaps put in where music can be heard without the text;
4. Think in terms of two different sorts of music for the poem:
  - **Accompaniment**, which is made of repeated patterns which go on underneath the text; and,
  - **Descriptive moments**, where a moment in the text is illustrated by a single musical 'moment'.

### Resources

To create music for the poem you'll need to find a selection of percussion instruments or other objects which could make an interesting sound (see step 2). If anyone plays other instruments these can be used as well. It's important that there are always people who are not playing instruments, as they will be reading the poem. You can either divide the group into two, speakers and band, or simply make sure everyone gets to play and speak at some point during the piece.

We're going to use an extract from Dahl's *The Crocodile* as an example of the composition process. This can be found at [poemhunter.com/roald-dahl/](http://poemhunter.com/roald-dahl/)

<p><b>No animal is half as vile As Crocky-Wock, the crocodile. On Saturdays he likes to crunch Six juicy children for his lunch</b></p>
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### STEP 1: Reading and understanding the poem

This is really important! Read through the poem to the class and then try reading it together. Most importantly encourage this reading to be *expressive*, not monotone. To help this, you can encourage:

- Changing the **pitch** of one's voice
- Putting in **pauses** for dramatic effect
- Using **different types of voices** at different times (whispering, shouting)
- **Emphasising** important words

For instance:

**No animal is half as vile**

*emphasise 'vile'*

**As Crocky-Wock, the crocodile.**

**On Saturdays he likes to crunch**

*start quietly, get louder – loudest on ‘crunch’*

## Six juicy children for his lunch

*slower and more elongated on 'juicy'*

When you're reading it through, think about how the poem is structured: are there any 'paragraphs'? Using these points will help you work out sections within the poem. For instance, *The Crocodile* can be broken down into about four sections (have a look at it on the poem-hunter website to see what you think).

Dividing the poem into sections can help in two ways:

- So that smaller groups can work on a coherent section
- So that the underlying musical accompaniment for a section is (basically) the same

## STEP 2: Instruments

The piece you and your class create will be for voices reading the poem and an accompaniment played on instruments, body percussion and possibly (should you choose to head in this direction) other objects which make an interesting sound. Before you bring the instruments out to use in class, it's worth checking that you have an interesting selection and that they're in working order. It's also worth trying them out so that you know how to play them effectively yourself! For instance:



- **Shakers** (maracas, egg shakers, etc.): not broken or cracked. Different sized shakers make slightly different sounds.
- **Tambourines**: to hold these silently, hold them horizontally so the jingles lie flat.
- **Bells** (jingles, finger cymbals, etc.): are the bells all there? Do the strings on the finger cymbals need re-tying?



- **Drums:** if a drum head is split don't use it. Which drums are for hands only, which can be used with beaters? Different sounds can be made by, for instance, rubbing the head, or hitting the rim.
- **Triangles:** are there triangle beaters as well as triangles? Strings can be problematic (the triangle spins round and the player misses!). One can hold it by suspending it on an extended finger.
- **Cymbals:** if these are pairs of clash cymbals, are the handles present so they can be held? If they go on a stand, is a stand available? Try a selection of hard and soft beaters to explore the different sounds they make. If a short cymbal sound is needed the player will have to dampen the cymbal by holding it, or placing it firmly against their body.
- **Glockenspiels and xylophones:** are all the notes present? Are the pegs which hold the keys in place all present and upright (i.e. not bent)? Try different hard and soft beaters to explore the sounds which can be made.
- **Chime bars:** these can be played by individuals, so are there the same number of beaters as chime bars?
- **Beaters:** make sure you have plenty available and that you are aware of how hard/soft they are. Do the heads fit on the stick securely?
- **Scrapers (guiros):** if any of these are cracked, they will soon break. The 'wrong' end of a standard beater works fine to play these if you don't have the proper sticks.
- **Castanets:** are the pairs tied together so that they have a natural 'spring'?
- **Wood blocks, claves, wooden agogo bells:** you will need hard, wooden beaters for these, so make sure you have enough.
- **Cow bells, metal agogo bells:** these can be very loud, so experiment which beater gives the best sound. A less harsh sound can be produced by holding the bell of the instrument whilst playing.

***You may find you have many other instruments in school not listed: so take the time to explore them!***

Body percussion is using your body as a percussion instrument. The class could explore various sounds in their piece:

- Hand claps
- Finger clicks
- Foot stamps
- Thigh slaps
- Chest thumps
- Cheek taps

Vocal sounds could also be used during the piece, for instance:

- Snoring
- Grunting
- Sighing
- Blowing (like the wind)
- Whistling

- Screaming
- Murmuring/whispering
- Pop sounds
- 'Mmmm' sounds
- Hissing

Finally, the class could explore sounds made by different unusual objects. This would require some preparation by you, the teacher, beforehand so that appropriate materials are to hand before the class starts work:

- Crumpling newspaper
- Ripping newspaper
- Crumpling plastic carrier bags
- Saucepans or other metal objects being hit
- Rulers held on a table and flicked
- Pencils tapping on a table top or table leg
- Blowing across the tops of plastic water bottles
- Glasses gently being tapped with something hard
- Bottles filled with different amounts of water being tapped
- Walking in a tray of gravel

And the children might play their own instruments, which could be incorporated as well. However, this can lead to individuals wanting to play pieces they know already to the class – a musical show and tell. It might be worth factoring this in as a separate activity to the composing session.

### STEP 3: Accompaniment

<p><b>No animal is half as vile As Crocky-Wock, the crocodile. On Saturdays he likes to crunch Six juicy children for his lunch</b></p>
---

Read the section and decide with the class the best speed for it:

- This can depend on the character of the section. If this section is too fast, it feels too flippant and not dangerous.
- Try it at different speeds with the class and agree on the correct one.

**Which instrument(s) would work well as an accompaniment for this section**, i.e. to be played underneath the spoken narration? This can be explored with the class, though it can be helpful if you've thought through the possibilities yourself.

The crocodile is obviously mean and nasty, so certain instruments might not seem appropriate (such as sleigh bells), whilst others might work fine (e.g. drum). The class can

read the poem aloud to several different instrumental accompaniments – playing a steady beat – to see which one they like best.

Having chosen an instrument and decided who is playing it (I would choose 2-3 people), they could either stick with a very simple accompaniment or find something a little more complicated. Here's an example of both:

BEAT:	1	2	3	4
No	an- i-	mal is	half as	vile
<i>Simple accomp.</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>Complex accomp.</i>	X	X x	X	X x

This accompaniment pattern would certainly be fine for the first four lines.

You can also change with the rhythm of some words, for instance saying '*Crocky-wock*' quickly:

BEAT:	1	2	3	4
As	Crocky wock	the	croc- o-	dile
<i>Drum</i>	X	X x	X	X

Changing the rhythm of some words can highlight them as well as stopping the reading becoming monotonous.

**What happens with the pauses, stops and changes of speed you have agreed on when reading the poem?** There are three options:

- The accompaniment stops too
- The accompaniment carries on, playing the same thing without the words being spoken
- The accompaniment does something different

Discuss these options with the class and decide together. You can see how this might work in the fourth line of *The Crocodile*:

BEAT:	1	2	3	4
Six	jui - cy	chil - dren	for his	lunch
<i>Drum</i>	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	X x	X	X x

Here the first beat is lengthened and the drum fills in with a roll.

There could also be a gap after the third line '*crunch*', though here it would work if the accompaniment continued.

#### STEP 4: Illustrative percussion and sounds

Now you have the words spoken and a basic accompaniment, another layer can be added. Discuss with the class whether there are important words which could do with something extra to illustrate them musically. I've highlighted a couple of places in the first two lines where something could be added:

No animal is half as <b>vile</b> As <b>Crocky-Wock</b> , the crocodile. On Saturdays he likes to <b>crunch</b> Six <b>juicy</b> children for his <b>lunch</b>
--

Once you and the class have decided on some important words, collectively decide what sounds would be good on those moments:

- **'Vile'**: a nasty sound, something rattle-y perhaps. Try an African bead shaker or even a Vibraslap if you have one
- **'Crocky-wock'**: A big snap after the words 'Crocky-wock' so perhaps on woodblock. If you remember, these were being said more quickly, so the snap sound will be on the second beat.
- There's a gap after **'crunch'**, so fill this with some crunchy sounds. Perhaps crunchy newspaper could be used?
- Add a scraper on **'juicy'**. Or how about the inside of a metal saucepan being scraped with a metal spoon?
- On the final **'lunch'** try a great big hand clap (with the hands coming down vertically like crocodile jaws).

So far the first lines will become:

BEAT:	1	2	3	4
No	an- i-	mal is	half as	vile
<i>Drum</i>	X	X x	X	X
<i>Rattle</i>				xxxxxxxxxxxxx

BEAT:	1	2	3	4
As	Crocky wock	the	croc- o-	dile
<i>Drum</i>	X	X x	X	X
<i>Wood block</i>		X		

BEAT:	1	2	3	4
On	Sat- ur-	days he	likes to	crunch
<i>Drum</i>	X	X x	X	X

BEAT:	1	2	3	4
(no words)				
<i>Crunchy paper</i>	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
<i>Drum</i>	X	X x	X	X

BEAT:	1	2	3	4
Six	jui - cy	chil- dren	for his	lunch
<i>Hand clap</i>				X
<i>Drum</i>	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	X x	X	X

### STEP 5: Working in smaller groups

Working on the first part of the poem gives the class a model of how to develop their own section of the piece, and you could then send them off to work in small groups (c. six children in each group) on a specific section.

To summarise, the steps are:

1. Practice speaking the lines together.
2. Choose an appropriate instrument to accompany the text. Either they play a steady pulse or something more complicated, but repetitive. One or two people can play this. *Make sure any pauses or changes of speed remain!*
3. Work out important words (and pauses/gaps) in the poem which could be illustrated by another sound.
4. Practise what they've created so that they're prepared to share it with the rest of the class.

When each group shares their work, they will obviously both read the poem and play the instruments for their section. When you bring the full piece together, the whole class could read the entire poem and each of the smaller groups provide the accompaniment for the section they've created.

### STEP 6: Introductions, interludes and possibly a postlude

- ***Introductions*** go at the start of the piece, before any words are spoken.
- ***Interludes*** go between sections of the poem
- ***Postludes*** end a piece – it's an instrumental 'outro' winding up the entire piece.

In their simplest form, introductions, interludes and postludes can all be exactly the same music, just played at different points in the song. They can help to glue a piece together which otherwise might sound a bit disjointed.



## Introductions

The first one to work out is the introduction, but don't do this until you've composed the first section. Use the accompaniment pattern from the first section as the basis for the introduction. So:

BEAT:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<i>Drum</i>	X	X x	X	X x	X	X x	X	X x

This is the simplest form of introduction, and is very basic. For something more complex, the class can create a tune which sets the atmosphere of the poem.

The opening of *The Crocodile* has a sinister quality, so the class could choose four notes which they feel captures this. Some sets of notes will create this atmosphere better than others. **Out of these two options, which one works best?**

**C      G      E      F**

*Or*

**D      A      F      E**

1. To create a tune, sit with a set of chime bars (notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B and C').
2. Four children each choose a note.
3. Play them in the order suggested. ***Does that particular order work, is it the right atmosphere?*** If not, someone can change the order or replace one of the notes with a different one until a good tune is found.

**Extension:** This activity can be extended by everyone having a chime bar in the class, and each group sitting together as part of one large circle. You will also need eight A4 piece of paper, each with a different pitch written on it. These are laid out in the middle of the circle in a row:

<b>C↓</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C↑</b>
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(The arrows on 'C' indicate high or low C).

1. A conductor is chosen. They walk along the line and whichever note they stand on is then played by children with the correct chime bar.
2. The class can experiment with different tunes by changing the order and removing notes from the pitch line until they find something they like.

- Once you have your tune, two to three children can learn it and add it to your accompaniment. The introduction can start with either the tuned instruments, or the other instrument, or both together.

Here's an example for *The Crocodile*:

BEAT:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<i>Drum</i>	X	X x	X	X x	X	X x	X	X x
<i>Tune</i>					D A	F E		

BEAT:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
				No	An- i-	mal is	half as	vile
<i>Drum</i>	X	X x	X	X x	X	X x	X	X x
<i>Tune</i>	D A	F E						

In this example, after the tune is played there is a two beat gap (on beats 3 and 4 after the second and third count of 4). This could be left empty, with just the drum playing, or a further sound could be added.

### Interludes and Postludes

It's probably best to base these on the introduction – the simplest form of them would be that they are exactly the same as the introduction. But, they could be varied by:

- Adding a new tune
- Replacing the original tune with a different one
- Adding further instruments
- Making it longer/shorter

The very end of the postlude needs to sound like an ending, so this will need to be changed.

Here are very simple questions that will help you and the class decide:

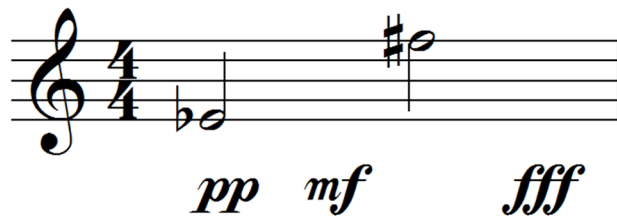
- *Does it finish loudly – how about all the instruments joining in and ending with a crash?*
- *Does it end quietly – how about all the instruments join in together after the last line of poetry and then gradually drop out leaving just the tune played on its own?*

The class can decide which sort of ending they would like the piece to have.

### STEP 7: Dynamics and Expression

To make a performance feel alive it's important to think about **dynamics** (loud and quiet) and **expression** with the class. In terms of dynamics, you can prompt the class to think about places in the poem which are:

- Loud
- Quiet
- Start quietly but become louder
- Start loud but become quieter
- Sudden changes in dynamic (e.g. quiet with a sudden loud moment)



This is important with both the way the text is spoken and the way instruments are played.

**Expression** means playing and/or speaking with some sense of feeling. Often this is accomplished by **dynamics**. For instance, deciding on a word or note which is most important in a phrase, and then heading towards it and away from it by getting louder at the beginning and quieter at the end of the phrase.



But it can also be about the way the music is played. It can be helpful to have two expressive pairs in mind: **long-short, gentle-harsh**:

- Long sounds
- Short sound
- Gentle sounds, *played carefully/soft beaters*
- Harsh, *played with real attack/hard beaters*

**Long and short:** many percussion instruments only play short sounds (e.g. claves) but some metal ones ring on and the sound will need to be dampened to create a short sound. To achieve longer sounds, children using instruments they already play (recorder, violin, etc.) might be helpful.

**Gentle and harsh:** on percussion this might involve different types of beaters, e.g. wooden beaters on a xylophone are very harsh; soft, rubber ones are very gentle.

These pairs of sound can be used to create different **expressive** effects:

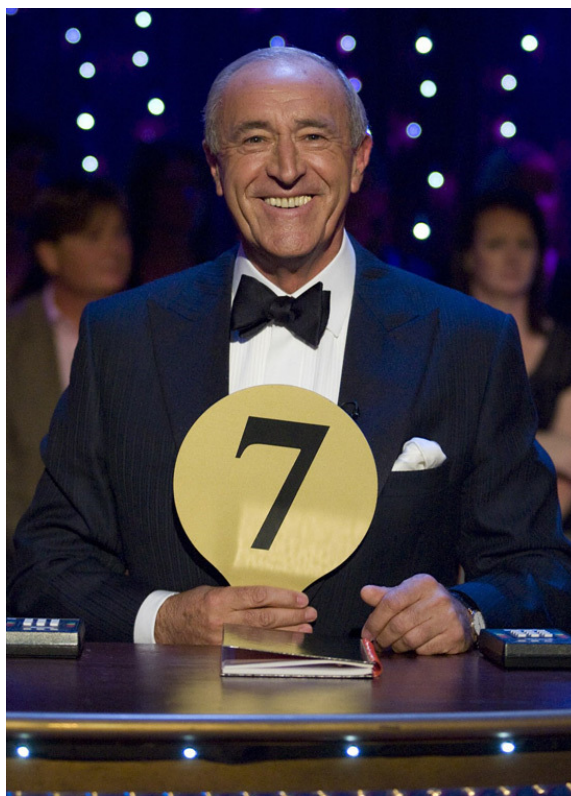
- **Long and gentle:** *calm/relaxed*
- **Long and harsh:** *strident/forceful*
- **Short and gentle:** *snowflakes falling, tiptoeing*
- **Short and harsh:** *angry*

## STEP 8: Evaluation

Evaluation of what one has created is an **important part of the creative process**. But, it has to be tackled carefully, as too much evaluative thinking too early in the process can shut down **experimentation** and **playfulness**, which is the engine room of creativity.

However, there are moments in the process outlined above in which evaluation is already being used:

- Deciding on the character of the poem (or parts of it) is important, as it helps the class to evaluate the most appropriate choice of instruments, i.e. something which reflects or supports that character.
- But it's also important to try out several options (i.e. to experiment with them) so that one can find the most appropriate, not just assume that the first thing someone chooses is the best option.



Exactly the same process occurs when choosing notes for the melody in the introduction; deciding which notes sound more appropriate for the character/emotion being created is a form of evaluation.

It's also useful to record groups as they perform, as well as while they rehearse what they've created. Video and audio can both be useful here:

- **Video:** the class gets a sense of what they look like in a whole performance. If there are one or two people who are fidgeting, they'll be able to see how distracting this is to the whole performance.
- **Audio only:** this encourages them to listen very carefully to the music they've created, without being distracted by the visuals. *Can they hear all the different things they wanted to put in there – words, accompaniment, other percussion?*

**TIP:** A useful format for reflecting on what a group has achieved is 'a star and a wish': individuals have to think of one positive element (a star) and one thing which could be improved (a wish).

## Further possibilities and cross curricular links

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Depending upon your class, there are further ways to extend this composing project:

- Use **actions** when reading the poem
- **Sing** parts of it, perhaps composing a simple melody through the same process as used for the introduction.
- Create a longer instrumental introduction, interlude and/or postlude which includes everyone playing their instrument.

The musical work could also be an inspiration for further cross curricular work:

- Further **literacy** work: the children create their own poems or stories, perhaps about characters in the original poem you've all worked on. Have a look at the Roald Dahl website ([www.roalddahl.com](http://www.roalddahl.com)) for some inspiration. They have lesson plans about some of the poems and stories, recipes and an online game.
- Create **artwork** for the poem, i.e. pictures, costumes. Create a gallery for the audience to admire before and after the performance. Perhaps take a look at the work of Quentin Blake (who illustrated many of Roald Dahl's stories) for inspiration. Some of his pictures are on [www.roalddahl.com](http://www.roalddahl.com) but also look at [www.quentinblake.com](http://www.quentinblake.com)
- **Drama**, act out the poem: this might require props, costumes and set design too.
- **Create a poster** advertising the performance, perhaps create tickets too (you could even have box office staff who collect the tickets!)
- Learn more about Roald Dahl – [www.roalddahl.com](http://www.roalddahl.com) is helpful here. He was a fighter pilot in World War Two and worked on the screenplay of the James Bond film 'You Only Live Twice'. He was also fascinated by the history of chocolate [www.roalddahl.com/roald-dahl/archive/archive-highlights/roald-dahls-history-of-chocolate](http://www.roalddahl.com/roald-dahl/archive/archive-highlights/roald-dahls-history-of-chocolate)



# Biographies

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**John Webb** is a composer and workshop leader, though he also writes, leads education and community projects, conducts, and trains teachers, amongst other things. Recent work includes: *The Last Plantagenet* for choir and orchestra (commissioned by Leicestershire Music Education Hub and Philharmonia Orchestra), and *Into the Light* for 2000 children and the Aurora Orchestra, both of which were conducted by the composer; *The Train* for a combination of Grade 1, Grade 6 and professional musicians; *Sing a Story* for Wigmore Hall and *The Girl Who Never Looked Up* for the National Theatre Learning Department. As a workshop and project leader he is currently working for Philharmonia Orchestra, Wigmore Hall, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Southwark Music Hub, Academy of St Martins in the Fields, Mid-Wales Music Trust, Royal Academy of Music, Spitalfields Music, Sound Connections, Live Music Now! and Create Arts. He works with a large variety of participants, from very young children and families, to vulnerable adults, deaf students, music students and prisoners. No two weeks are the same, and he wouldn't have it any other way.

## The Octagon

Since 1974, The Octagon has operated as a multi-purpose venue, providing arts and entertainment for the people of Yeovil, South Somerset, Somerset and beyond. Adam Burgan joined the Octagon in 2009 and under his leadership the venue has cemented its reputation for diverse and exciting programmes and popular participatory classes that bring over 250,000 to the venue every year. The Octagon Theatre has been developing its role in championing excellence in the arts forging a number of partnerships to support our creative ambitions; among them our partnership with Charles Hazlewood, and the Philharmonia Orchestra.

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