

MUSIC  
IN THE ROUND 

# WECOMPOSE KS3 RESOURCE PACK



2024–2025

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## About this project

Welcome and thank you for being part of Music in The Round's 'We Compose' project for 2024/2025!

This project from Music in the Round introduces KS3 students from all music backgrounds to composition through extensive resources and visits from professional musicians and composers. Students will be supported by emerging and professional composers to create their own music which will be performed by one of our partnered professional String Quartets at the end of the project in a culmination concert at a local venue.

As a teacher, you will learn new ideas for teaching composition including ideas for supporting students at different ability levels (including non-instrumentalists). Your students will learn new creative and composition skills. They will experience working with professional musicians and will be supported to create music they are interested in writing, and to take ownership of their own creative voices.

## The Commission Brief (KS3)

In groups of 4-6, your student's commission is to compose a brand-new piece of music for String Quartet. Each piece can be up to 5 minutes in length and be written in any style that the students like.

We'd like your piece to be inspired in some way by one of our 4 key string quartet pieces. These are 'Death & The Maiden' by Franz Schubert, 'String Quartet No.8' by Dmitri Shostakovich, 'Strum' by Jessie Montgomery and 'Tuggemo' by Anna Meredith. We explain some ideas on how to go about this through this pack and a series of short films. Our team of composers will then support you and your students to translate these ideas into pieces of music for string quartet. The Quartet will also launch the project with a presented concert, where they will perform all four of the pieces.

## Timeline of the project

### September 2024 Teachers' INSET session

Led by Andrew Smith, this one-day training session brings teachers together for a practical workshop on teaching composition with KS3. Expect new ideas that will help you engage students of mixed abilities.

### September/ October 2024 Introductory concert

The Quartet will perform a concert for your students, introducing them to the instruments and key repertoire.

### November 2024 - February 2025 Workshops with composers

Your school will be partnered with one of our WeCompose professional composers. Over the course of three in-school visits, they will support your students to write pieces for string quartet. In between visits, we expect your students will keep working on their compositions in class.

### March 2025 Deadline for scores

Send us your scores, DAW files, or other materials (as agreed with your composer) and we will make these up into a set of parts for the Quartet to play from.

### June-July 2025 Culmination day

At the end of the project, the Quartet will workshop then perform your students' compositions in a culmination event at a local venue in your region. We will record each composition during the concert.

## Planning the project – checklist

### After the INSET session

Start thinking about how you will group your students and fill in the Logbook survey.

### After the Introductory Concert

We recommend spending at least two more lessons as a class getting familiar with the Key Repertoire:

- Use our Listening Guide (page 8) to revisit the Key Repertoire pieces and challenge each group to choose their Inspiration Piece
- Watch our Short Films about each of the Key Repertoire pieces and challenge each group to decide how they will be inspired by their chosen piece. Students should not feel restricted by only choosing one piece, and may feel inspired by different elements across the pieces. Remember that you and the students can come back to these films to help them at any time in the project.

### Before the first composer visit

- Ask each student to fill out the 'Initial Questionnaire' in their 'Student Composer Diary' (online).
- Have a go at the 'Experimenting with musical ideas' activity (page 11 - this could be used as a lesson starter)
- Choose a route into the composition process (see below) and aim to have spent a lesson on one of these activities. You could choose one route for the whole class, or set each group off on their own route. Whichever route you choose, students can use the 'Student Resource Pack' to help them keep track of the decisions they make.

Start with melodies/  
ostinatos, page 12

Start with texture,  
page 28

Start with harmony,  
page 20

### Before the second composer visit

By the second visit, aim that all groups have developed their initial ideas in some way. This could mean:

- Groups have developed their melodic ideas and have several phrases completed. See page 18 for activities.
- Groups have developed their melodic ideas by harmonising them (necessarily starting to think about texture too). See page 23 for activities.
- Groups have developed their melodic ideas by organising them into the quartet texture (necessarily starting to think about harmony too). See page 25 for activities.

- Groups have created melodies from their harmonic progressions. See page 17 for these activities.
- Groups have planned the harmonic progression for a large portion of their piece (necessarily thinking about structure and form). See page 20 for activities.
- Groups have organised their harmonic ideas into the quartet texture. See page 25 for activities.

### Before the third composer visit

Aim that all groups are well underway with developing their melodic, harmonic and textural ideas. All sections should be roughly sketched out.

### **After the third composer visit**

Set a realistic end point for each composition and support the students to reach this point. If that means that their piece only uses two or three instruments, rather than the full quartet, that is fine. If that means the students have one short but fully developed section of music, that is fine. Support students to write idiomatically for the string quartet using our 'Idiomatic Writing Tips' (page 25) - are the parts in the correct range for the instruments? Can the students write some dynamics, or indications about techniques? Ensure each group has given their piece a name, and please write student names on the scores or filenames.

### **At the score deadline**

Send [wecompose@musicintheround.co.uk](mailto:wecompose@musicintheround.co.uk) and your composer your scores, or other materials (such as DAW files). If your compositions are still in sketches, please have agreed this in advance with your composer so that you can have come up with a plan for how the composer will make this into a set of parts for the quartet.

Please send any scores in mxml format, so we can open them in Musescore or Sibelius. Please send any DAW files with the exported mp3s and midi, in case we have different software to you!

### **Before the Culmination Event**

Your students will get the most out of the event if you have spent a bit of time with our 'Before the Culmination Event' activity (page 36).

### **A top tip for working on this project with KS3**

Although your students will be working in groups of 4-6, many of the activities can be done in pairs. This can be an effective way of working that means you can get lots of material develop quickly (rather than all six students all working on and developing the same material). Throughout this pack, we have given lots of advice for when to start activities in groups, when to switch to pair work, and how pair work can be brought back into the group composition by thinking through things like structure and texture.

## About this pack and how to use it

This pack accompanies a series of short films about each of the key string quartet pieces. The films discuss what each of the pieces are about, the composers who wrote them and some of the composition techniques they used. This pack contains tips and further activities that both unpack and develop from ideas in the films, as well as giving you some practical advice for managing group composition activities with a larger class. We hope that together, these resources will inspire your students to be both creative and critical over the music they write.



There is also an additional film introducing the Ligeti String Quartet, which includes some top tips on how to compose for them. All of the films can be found here: [musicintheround.co.uk/wecompose-2024-2025-key-stage-3-resource-hub](https://musicintheround.co.uk/wecompose-2024-2025-key-stage-3-resource-hub) (under essential KS3 viewing and reading) or at the QR code.

In addition to the practical tips for your own planning, we have also designed this pack so that certain pages can be photocopied and used directly with your students. These have a dashed border.

*This pack was written by Andrew Smith, Ellen Sargen and John Webb.*

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www.musicintheround.co.uk*

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# ACTIVITIES FOR LISTENING & INSPIRATION

## Choosing your inspiration piece

The project will launch for your students with a presented concert, where the String Quartet will perform all of the four key string quartet pieces mentioned above. Following this, each student group will need to decide which piece they will use as the inspiration for their own music before they start composing. To help with this, we suggest that the students listen to the pieces again and ask themselves the questions below.

1. How did the music make you feel?
2. Were there any moments you particularly liked/disliked? Why?
3. What words would you use describe the following elements of music in the piece:
  - Melody
  - Rhythm
  - Dynamics
  - Tempo
  - Tonality/ mood
  - Texture
  - Form
4. How did these help express the mood or feeling in the music?
5. How were the different instruments used throughout the piece?
6. Did you notice any contrasting moments in the piece? How was this music different?

You can access all the 4 pieces here: [www.musicintheround.co.uk/wecompose-2024-2025-key-stage-3-resource-hub](http://www.musicintheround.co.uk/wecompose-2024-2025-key-stage-3-resource-hub)

### Try this with your class: resource

- You could ask students to use our Listening Guide for this activity (also found in the Student Resource Pack)
- You could even ask your students to fill out this worksheet on a piece of their choice at home. Encourage your students to bring ideas they have heard in other music they like to their piece.

### ACTION

Remember to ask your students to fill out the 'Initial Questionnaire' in their Student Composer Diary before the first composer visit.



**Your name:**

**Composer:**

**Title:**

**Date of composition:**

**Instruments:**

Start in the circle below. As you listen, note down any words that you would use to describe the music.

Then, think about the seven elements of music in the coloured circles. How do each of these elements help express the mood, or feeling of the music? If you're stuck, start by mapping your words from the circle below onto the different elements.

1. What words would you use to describe this piece? Does it convey a particular mood or feeling? (Write your words below)

2. How do these elements (tonality/ tempo etc.) convey the mood or feeling of the piece? (Write your ideas under each heading)

**RYTHM**

**TEMPO**

**MELODY**

**HARMONY & TONALITY**

**TEXTURE**

**DYNAMICS**

**FORM**

Your name:

Composer:

Title:

Date of composition:

Instruments:

Start in the middle on the other side of the sheet. As you listen, note down any words that you would use to describe each of the eight elements of music in the coloured circles.

Work your way out. How do each of the features you note down help express the mood, or feeling of the music? You can then come back to this side and note down anything that feels important to you under each of these headings.

What can you discover about the context of this piece?

What inspired it? What circumstances was it written in? What pieces was it written to be similar -- or different -- to?

How were the different instruments used within this piece?

What do you like about this piece?

Try to be as specific as possible

What do you dislike about this piece?

It's OK not to like it! Try to be as specific as possible

Did you notice any contrasting moments in the piece?

Overall, how does this music make you feel?

When you are composing, what could you take from this piece?

# STARTER ACTIVITIES

## Experimenting with musical ideas

The following short exercise is designed to get your students composing in their groups and to create short musical ideas which can be developed on.

### Step 1:

Assuming your student groups have chosen their 'inspiration piece', ask them to think of as many words as they can that relate to the piece they have chosen, and write them down. For example, this could be how the music makes them feel, what it reminds them of, or any particular characteristics of the music. For example, here's a collection of words we thought of when listening to 'Tuggemo' by Anna Meredith:

sighing      swarm      direction      hypnotic  
repetitive      layers      glissando      dancing  
uplifting      club      people      movement  
beat      weave      flying      electronic

### Step 2:

In their groups and using whatever instruments are available (including their bodies/voices), ask the students to combine two words (e.g. electronic swarm) then create a short musical idea to describe them. This could be one musical idea that everybody in the group plays together, for example a melody or rhythm. Or it could be multiple parts that come together to create one idea.

When composing to describe their word, encourage each group to think about whether their musical idea ought to:

- Be fast or slow
- Be piano or forte (quiet or loud)
- Use regular or irregular rhythms
- Use long notes or short notes
- Be high or low in pitch
- Use notes that are close together or far apart (in harmony or melody)
- Have one part or multiple parts layered together

### Step 3:

Extend this activity by asking each group to change one or two parameters from the list above (e.g. tempo, rhythmic content etc.). What does it sound like now? Do they like it?

### Step 4:

Challenge your students to document their ideas on paper\* or on software (notation software or DAW). If your students like both versions they created (between steps 3 and 4), ask them to write both down. Students can use these ideas as a starting point for their composition, or use them as reference points later in the process when they are developing their pieces.

\*The Student Resource pack might be helpful for students here.



## Try this with your class: peer learning

### Activities

- Once the groups have composed their musical ideas and are able to perform them, write down each groups' selected words on the board so that everyone in the class can see them. However, it's important that the groups don't know whose word is whose.
- Ask each group to perform their musical idea, while the rest of the class listen and try and match each pair of words to a group's performance. Share the results and allow the students time to feedback on their decisions.

## ACTIVITIES FOR MELODY AND PHRASING

Sometimes it can be difficult for composers to know where to start! So, here's a few short activities you can try with your class which will result in them composing a melody. In all of these activities, it's important to remember how you want the audience to feel when listening to your music as the choices you make will affect this.

### IDEA ONE: Creating Melodies Using Words

#### Step 1:

Ask each group to listen to their chosen 'inspiration piece' from the four key string quartet pieces. After they've done this, ask them to write down any single words or short phrases that spring to mind when listening. For example, this could be how the piece made them feel; what they imagined when they listened; describing the music etc. Here is a list of words we made after listening to the 2nd movement of 'Death & The Maiden' by Franz Schubert:

sad                      funeral                      minor                      hope                      hymn

strings                      fleeing                      light & dark                      gets more intense

escape                      rest                      talking                      pleading                      nervous

variation                      conversation                      peace                      death

#### Step 2:

Now ask each group to choose a word from the list they have created and think of a few new words that are associated with each one. For example, words associated with 'sad' could be 'cry', 'tears' or 'pain'. Repeat this exercise for each word in the original list so create one wordbank. For example:

sad funeral minor hope hymn

strings fleeing light & dark gets more intense

escape rest talking pleading nervous

variation conversation peace death maiden

tears cry pain believe church

tired major bright

black

future calm hands pray sing

heart run tunnel silence

end

### Step 3:

Ask each group to create a sentence using only the words from their wordbank and some connecting words (e.g. 'and', 'a', 'to', 'for', 'with' etc.)

You could put a restriction on the word count and say that the final sentence can be a maximum of 9 words. For example, using words from the bank above:

A maiden fleeing the hands of death

Pleading and praying for a brighter future

Major and minor, light and dark conversations

### Step 4:

Ask each group to think about the tempo of the melody they want to compose. Remind students to think about the mood they're trying to create through their music - what tempo does that mood suggest? For example, do they want a fast, frantic melody (like in the 2nd movement of Shostakovich's Quartet No.8) or one that is slower, more melancholic (like the start of the 2nd movement of Schubert's 'Death & The Maiden'?)

Once the groups have agreed on a tempo, ask them to try saying their sentence in rhythm, over a pulse.

NB It can be easy for every word to become a crotchet or quaver in this exercise. Try to avoid this if possible and encourage your students to experiment with rests, long notes for different syllables and dotted rhythms.

### Step 5:

Once each group has decided on their rhythm, they now need to add pitches to the notes in order to create a melody. Again, it's important that the choices the students make reflect the mood they want to create for the listener. To help with this please see the table overleaf on page 15 which provides information on some different scales,

the pitches they use and the mood they can help create.

NB You may find that students apply just one pitch to each of the syllables in their rhythmic sentence. It's also possible to apply more than one pitch to a syllable, especially for notes of longer durations.

Students should constantly reflect and edit their work until they have composed a melody they are happy with - this can be a process of trial and error!



### **If your students are struggling...**

- If your students are struggling to find rhythms they are happy with, ask them to identify one or two important words in their sentence, and give these a rhythmic character. Can they then incorporate these into a full sentence?
- Students can also use the important words their sentences to help them make decisions about which pitches to choose. Ask each student to start by playing their entire rhythm on one note. On the next play-through move up or down (to a note in the scale) on the first important word. Continue moving pitch on important words until students have a melody they are happy with.



### **Facilitate pair work**

#### Activities

- You can generate lots of material quickly by asking the group to work as a whole to write their sentences and decide upon a scale. Each group can then split into pairs and to create different melodies from the same material. Different ideas might be organised into different sections later, used to develop a melody (phrase A and phrase B) or become a melody and counter-melody.

Scale	Example	Mood
Major	D major - D, E, F#, G, A, B, C#, (D)	Happy, uplifting
Minor	D natural minor - D, E, F, G, A, Bb, C, (D)	Sad, more reflective
Harmonic Minor	D harmonic minor - D, E, F, G, A, Bb, C#, (D)	Scary, haunting
Whole Tone	C, D, E, F#, G#, A#	Dreamy
Blues	D, F, G, G#, A, C, (D)	Jazzy
Chromatic	All of the pitches!	Free-falling, exciting
Major Pentatonic	D, E, F#, A, B	Joyful, used a lot in folk music
Minor Pentatonic	D, E, F, A, C	Used in rock and folk music
Octatonic	D, E, F, G, G#, Bb, B, C#	Dark, mysterious
Hexatonic	D, F, F#, A, Bb, C	Spacious, elusive

D major

D minor

D harmonic minor

Whole tone

Blues

Chromatic

Major Pentatonic

Minor Pentatonic

Octatonic

Hexatonic

If your students are playing these scales on transposing instruments, we have typed these at: [www.musicintheround.co.uk/wecompose-2024-2025-key-stage-3-resource-hub](http://www.musicintheround.co.uk/wecompose-2024-2025-key-stage-3-resource-hub)

## IDEA TWO: Clapping Phrases Into Melodies

### Step 1:

Ask each group to decide upon a tempo for their piece, then clap the pulse as a steady beat. The tempo could be taken from the Inspiration Piece the group is using (e.g. Andante con molto (a walking pace with movement) from Death and the Maiden). Make sure the whole group are comfortable with clapping the pulse before moving onto Step 2.

### Step 2:

Split each group into pairs and ask the students to label themselves player A and B. Over their steady pulse, player A claps a rhythm which fits within 8 counts. This rhythm could be inspired by their Inspiration piece - perhaps incorporating some of the rhythms from the piece, or perhaps they are inspired by the energy and mood of the piece to create new rhythms. Player A should experiment until they are happy and the pair should practice this rhythm until both can clap it over the steady pulse.

Player B now claps a different rhythm in response, again making sure that their rhythm fits within 8 counts and experimenting until the pair is happy with the call and response between them (NB call and response is a common technique used by composers, including some of the four key string quartet pieces).

### Step 3:

Challenge each pair to document their ideas on paper\* or on software (putting their rhythm on one pitch in a notation software or DAW). \*The Student Resource Pack might be helpful here.

### Step 4:

The groups now need to apply pitches to the rhythms they have just composed. You may want to limit the pitches to just 2 or 3 to begin with and then extend these parameters once the students are comfortable with the task. This can be done as a paper activity\* or on software (notation software or DAW).

\*Ask your students to try playing their melodies (or ask another student to play them), so they can hear what they have created and make any changes if necessary.

As mentioned in the previous exercise, it's important that the choices the students make reflect the mood they want to create for the listener. To help with this please see the table on page 15 which provides information on some different scales, the pitches they use and the mood they can help create. Students can experiment by applying the pitches from one of these scales to their rhythms.



### Adapt this as a class starter...

As the teacher, you can decide a tempo and clap the steady pulse for the class to follow. Split the class into pairs where Player A claps a call over 8 counts, and then Player B claps a response over 8 counts. Keep repeating this activity then ask each pair to choose a call and response rhythm they particularly liked. Continue as above from Step 3.



# Composing Melodies From Chords

## Preparation (in advance or as a class)

In this activity students will work from chords to create melodies. We recommend that you have either already completed “ACTIVITIES FOR HARMONY” on page 20, or (if this is your starting point for the whole process) that you run a starter activity where you pick 4 chords from a common key as a class.

### Step 1:

Pick 4 chords and ask each group to write down the single notes that make up those chords underneath. As always, the chords they choose should reflect the mood they want to create for their overall piece. For example:

Chord:	Am	C	F	G
Notes:	A, C, E	C, E, G	F, A, C	G, B, D

### Step 2:

Ask groups to pick one note from each of their chords. For example using the chords above, we have chosen the notes C, G, F and D.

While continually counting 1, 2, 3, 4 over a steady pulse, ask each group to play (or write down) each of their chosen notes on the first beat. For example:

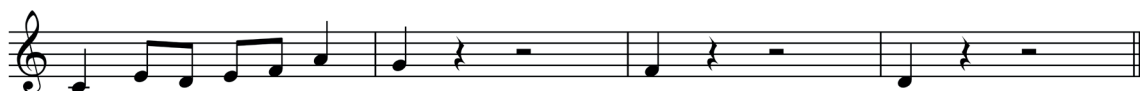
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
C				G				F				D			



These will be the starting notes to the group's melody.

### Step 3:

Ask each group to add some passing notes to get from their 1st note to their 2nd note. For example:



### Step 4:

Now ask each group to add some passing notes to get from their 2nd note to their 3rd note. For example:



### Step 5:

Lastly, ask each group to finish their melody off with some passing notes from their 3rd note to their 4th note. For example:



### Step 6:

One final idea your class could try is to add an 'anacrusis' to their melodies. This is a one or a few notes that come just before the first beat at the start of your melody. For example:



## Working effectively in groups / pairs

Each group could work on this activity in pairs:

- For Step 2, ask each pair to choose their own set of notes from the chords they defined in Step 1. Then split each pair into Player A and Player B. Player A should create the passing notes for the first two bars, and Player B should create the passing notes for the final two bars (responding in some way to Player A).
- NB By tasking pairs to create melodies using different starting notes, you will create an opportunity for students to think about phrasing, structure or texture later, when they come to develop their pieces (i.e. what happens if these melodies are used one after the other, or in different sections (at different tempos perhaps), or if one melody is given to Violin 1, and the Viola plays the second melody an octave lower (at the same time or 1-2 bars later perhaps).

Further tips:

- Each group might want to try drawing contours graphically (using lines on paper) before experimenting on their instruments/ software.
- Remind your students that passing notes can reach higher or lower than the harmony notes and might even define the highest or lowest points in the phrase.

## Developing your melody

Hopefully your students have now been able to compose a melody using some of the exercises above. It's important students are able to develop melodic ideas within a composition, rather than a collection of random, unconnected melodies. Below are a list of examples that students can experiment with in order to do this:

### Changing some of the pitches:

- What happens if a pitch goes up, instead of down from the original melody starting note (and vice versa)?
- What happens if the developed melody starts on a completely different note?

- What happens if students use a note that wasn't in the original melody (either from the same scale or outside of this scale)?

### Changing some of the rhythms

- What happens if some of the notes change duration (longer or shorter notes)?
- What happens if you syncopate some of the rhythms?
- What happens when the developed idea has note durations halved from the original (diminution)?
- What happened when the developed idea has note durations doubled from the original (augmentation)?

**Treating the melody as a sequence.** Students should consider how the mood has changed if they move their melody up a pitch, or conversely down a pitch.

### Play some or all of the original melody backwards (retrograde)

### Invert some or all of the original melody

**Experiment, play and combine some of these techniques together.**

Now you have a melody, ask the students to experiment with the tempo, articulation and dynamics for how they might want the string quartet to play it.

## Collaborative decision making

If each group has generated lots of different monophonic ideas but hasn't thought about texture or structure, it might be time to think about how they would like to arrange or combine their ideas.

Preparation: Ensure that all of the work students have generated so far is accessible on 1 computer or listening device.

- Ask each group to listen to all of the material they have created so far. Are there any phrases or ideas that feel like beginnings, middles or ends of the section, or piece?
- Could any of the material be arranged into a conversation between different members of the string quartet? (You could print out/photocopy any notation that has been created, then ask students to cut phrases out and arrange them, or ask students to start arranging their ideas inside a DAW).
- What is missing? What materials do the students need to develop their pieces now? Should the new material be similar or different to what they have already composed?
- Use the rest of the lesson to split into pairs. 1 pair could be responsible for starting these developments, and another pair could be responsible for combining the group's ideas into one notated score, graphic score, or DAW.

## ACTIVITIES FOR HARMONY

The following exercises enable the students to play and experiment with harmony. First of all, it's important that your students understand what harmony is...

Music would sound a little bit boring if it was just a series of notes played one at a time. In order to create music that portrays certain feelings or emotions, composers combine notes together, so they are played at the same time. This playing of more than one note at a time creates 'harmony'.

We can think of melody as a horizontal aspect of music, because melodies are a sequence of notes played one after the other. However, we can think of harmony as a vertical aspect of music with notes stacked on top of one another, because they're played at the same time.

Composers use harmony alongside other elements of music such as the tempo (speed), dynamics (volume), structure, rhythm, melody, instruments and texture, to convey certain feelings, emotions or moods through their music.

### Creating Harmony With Triads

Harmonies with two or more notes are called chords. One of the most commonly used chords is a triad. 'Tri' means the chord is made up of 3 notes.

Look at these notes from a C major scale (these are all the white notes on a piano):



To build a triad, you choose one note from the scale, miss one out, play the next, miss one out, and play the next. For example these chords...



...are created like this:

### Consonant & Dissonant Chords

The notes that are chosen for the chord change the quality of the sound. For example, if a chord is made up of notes that are all from the same scale like the example above, that creates a pleasing (or consonant) sound. Consonance in music is nice and easy to listen to but can be a little bland if there's too much.

To create chords with a more uneasy or dissonant sound, a composer would create chords using combinations of notes that are not all from the same scale. This helps give the music a bit of tension and drama!

Use the next activities to support your students to compose harmony.

## IDEA ONE: Composing and extending progressions

### Preparation (in advance or as a class)

In this activity students will create harmonic progressions. Before starting this activity, each group needs to have chosen a scale or key for their piece (you can also decide this for the class). We recommend that each group has spent some time thinking about the mood of their piece, and chosen a key/ scale that is suitable.

To aid the composing process, we recommend that each group is equipped with triads from chords 1 to 7 of their chosen scale. You can give your students these chords directly as a print out/ digital file, input them for each group on a notation software or DAW, or ask them to construct their own triads from their chosen scales (the Student Resource pack gives a template for this and it is also available at [www.musicintheround.co.uk/wecompose-2024-2025-key-stage-3-resource-hub](http://www.musicintheround.co.uk/wecompose-2024-2025-key-stage-3-resource-hub)).NB If guitarists are composing on their instruments, at KS3 we recommend they use our TAB Harmonies resource for this activity (rather than asking them to play triads on their guitars!)

It is up to you whether you/ your students label the chords with Roman Numerals, their names (tonic, supertonic, mediant, sub-dominant etc.), or whether you give each chord an original name that the students can relate to the mood/ story they are trying to express with their music (e.g. if my piece is about 'the sun rising over a city', I might decide that chord I sounds like 'a sleepy dusk', chord V sounds like 'the sun bursting through the clouds' and chord III sounds like 'a bustle of activity'. I can label the chords with these names (instead of with Roman numerals). You could also do this association activity directly with the Inspiration Pieces - what does chord III sound like in the story of Death and the Maiden? These labels (whichever you choose) will help you set limitations later.

#### Step 1:

Once each group is equipped with chords 1 to 7 of their chosen scale, challenge them to create at least two progressions from the options in front of them. Limit this activity in whatever way is suitable, i.e. specifying how many chords should be in the progression, or specifying the start/end chords (you can define the cadences implied in this way). It is important that your students experiment with different progressions and that they can hear the different options (i.e. by playing themselves, listening back through a DAW or notation software, or someone else plays them their options).

#### Step 2:

Challenge each group to create a moment of drama or tension in one of their progressions. Ask each group to choose a progression. Next, in any of the middle chords (not the first or last chord in the progression) challenge each group to add a note to an existing triad.

This note could:

- be a step higher or a step lower than one of the notes in the chord
- be a step higher or a step lower than one of the notes in the following chord
- belong to the scale or be a note from outside the scale

Remind your students to experiment with different sounds until they find something that they feel fits with a particular mood or expression they want to create in their piece. Remember to play through the progression as a whole.

## IDEA TWO: Improvising in harmony

### Step 1:

For this activity, your students will need to have composed some melodies already. It will work well with the 16-beat melodies composed in the 'Clapping Phrases Into Melodies' exercise on page 16. In their student groups, one musician will play their chosen melody.

### Step 2:

Another student in the group will compose a drone for this melody. To do this, they should choose just one note from the melody that they like the sound of when played along with the melody. Encourage the students to experiment with different notes for the drone and ask them to consider how these different notes change the mood of the overall sound. This can be an organic way for students who are interested in composing dissonant harmonies to experiment.

### Step 3:

Once the students have found a drone they are happy with, ask them to move to another pitch at some point during the melody. Experiment and practice playing this along with the melody.

### Step 4:

After moving to their second pitch, students can make one of three choices:

- Stay on this new pitch for the duration of the melody
- Move back to their original pitch (students must decide when this should happen)
- Make a further move to another new pitch
- Experiment and practice playing this along with the melody.

### Step 5:

Now try adding more students to the ensemble with each new musician added to the ensemble following steps 2-4.

### Tips:

1. Students can decide whether the combination of notes they use creates a consonant harmony (using pitches from within the same scale) or dissonant (using pitches from outside of their scale).
2. The students ought to experiment with making note changes at different points in the melody. How does this change the mood of the music? You could give the students 5 minutes to come up with 3 different harmonic progressions for their melodies. Limit the students to one-note harmonies at this point.

## Developing Harmony From A Melody

### Step 1:

Ask your students to choose one of their melodies (perhaps from one of the exercises on pages 12-16). For example:



If your students' melodies are rooted in a major or minor scale, they can compose a consonant sounding harmony. One way of doing this is to look at the first note in each bar of the melody. For example using the above melody, the notes would be C, G, F and D.

### Step 2:

Now ask the students to compose a series of triads that include the chosen notes from their melody. For example:

Chosen Note:	C	G	F	D
Name of triad:	Am	G	F	Dm
Notes in triad:	A, C, E	G, B, D	F, A, C	D, F, A

### Step 3:

If your students want to add some more harmonic colour to a consonant melody they have composed, they could try editing their progression in the following ways:

- Suspend one (or more) of their chords into the next bar for a couple of beats.
- Suspend a note from one chord into the beginning of the next chord
- Change one (or more) of their chords so that it is built from the note above the melody note (e.g. if the chosen melody note is C, build a triad on D: DFA). This melody note will become the 7th in the chord.
- Find a drone on one pitch that can be held underneath the entire phrase.
- A combination of the above

Remember to experiment and if they don't like it, change it!

### Step 4:

Once a student has decided on the harmonic progression they can now consider the role of each instrument in the quartet. For example, the notes from a triad don't all have to just be long notes, they could be applied to a rhythm etc.

### More on dissonance...

To create a dissonant sounding harmony, the combination of notes a student chooses must not relate to a specific scale. This music sounds very different to the consonant harmonies in the activity above and gives a much more uneasy feeling. The choices the student makes for the notes in a chord should depend on the overall mood they are trying to portray.

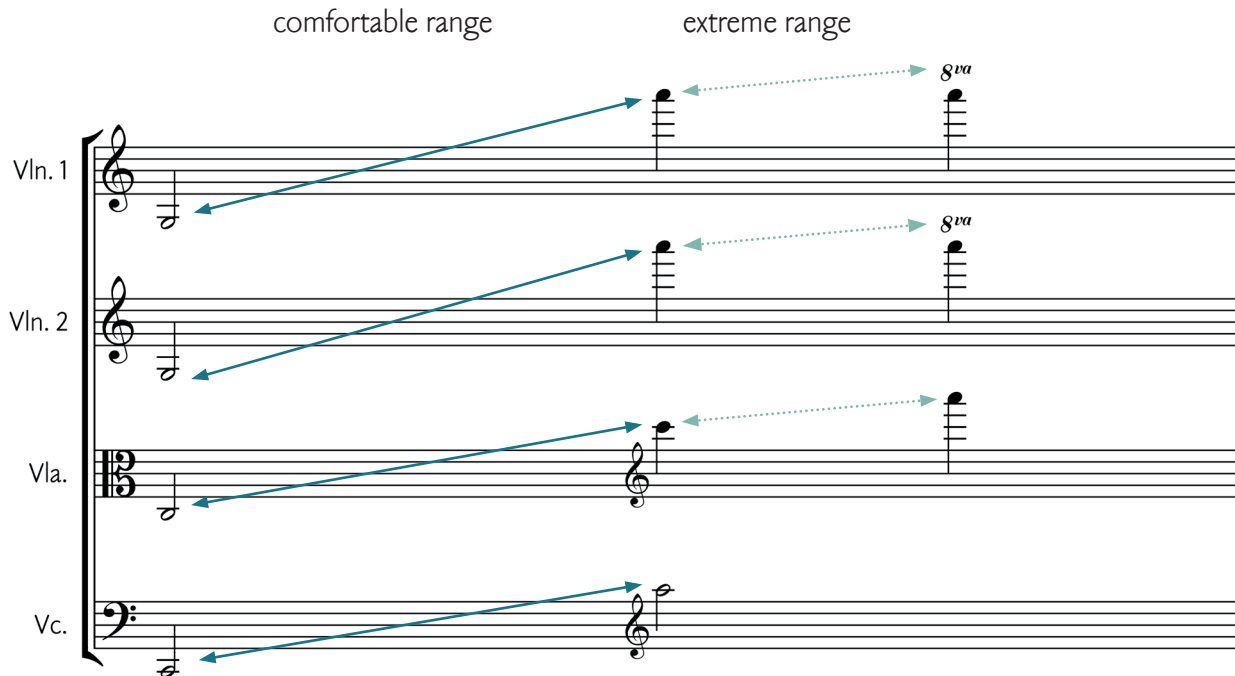
If your students want a piece with lots of dissonance, why not encourage them to write in chromatic harmony by choosing their own pitch set.



## IDIOMATIC WRITING TIPS

### Exploring A String Quartet

A string quartet is made up of 2 violins, a viola and a cello. Together they cover a wide range of pitches from the cello being able to play very low, the violins being able to play very high, and the viola being the filling in the middle of this musical sandwich!



There are things that all the instruments in a string quartet can do for example they can all play the strings with a bow (arco), or by plucking the strings with their fingers (pizzicato). Remember, each of the instruments in a string quartet has a unique sound quality and the decisions you make for how each of the instruments are used will affect the overall mood of the music.

Pizzicato example:

The musical score excerpt shows four staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is E-flat major (two flats). Violin 1 plays a sustained note with a fermata. Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello have 'pizz.' markings circled in red, indicating they are playing pizzicato. A triplet of eighth notes is marked at the end of the Violoncello staff.

excerpt from BEETHOVEN Ludwig Van, String Quartet in E-flat Major Op.74 "Harp", First movement (Poco adagio - Allegro), bars 125-128

Arco example:

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

excerpt from MENDELSSOHN Fanny, String Quartet in E-flat Major Op. 22, Second movement (Allegretto), bars 14-16

The role(s) of each instrument in a string quartet often change as a piece develops, and could include any of the following ideas:

- Playing a melody
- Playing a counter melody
- Providing harmonic accompaniment
- Providing a more rhythmic accompaniment
- Playing a motif
- Playing a bass line
- Playing extended techniques to provide certain effects

All of these roles contribute to the overall texture of the music. When we create music, we combine, mix and layer sounds together. Texture is the word we use to describe the way we do this. Different musical textures can depend on:

- How many instruments are playing at a particular time
- The timbre of the instruments that are playing
- What the instruments are actually playing

### Try this!

Learning objectives: identify / analyse

Task: match each label to the correct texture:

- Homophonic texture
- Polyphonic texture
- Melody and accompaniment

Violin I  
 Violin II  
 Viola  
 Violoncello

*ff*  
*ff*  
*ff*  
*ff*

sul pont  
 sul pont  
 sul pont  
 sempre sul pont

excerpt from MEREDITH, Anna, 'Tuggemo', bars 89-92

Violin I  
 Violin II  
 Viola  
 Violoncello

*pp*  
*pp*  
*pp*  
*pp*

excerpt from SCHUBERT, Franz, 'Death and the Maiden', Movement Two (Andante con moto) bars 1-4

guitar style (bow in hand)  
 pizz.  
 mf  
 sim.

excerpt from MONTGOMERY, Jessie, 'Strum', bars 3-4

## ACTIVITIES FOR TEXTURE

Experimenting with different textures can make music more interesting to listen to. In the following exercises we shall explore some different types of texture including practical example for your students.

### Composing Monophonic Textures

A monophonic texture is one single melody played by all instruments in unison/at the same time. A monophonic texture has no harmonic or rhythmic accompaniment, it's just one melody.

#### Step 1:

Ask your student groups to pick a memorable tune or emotive musical moment in something they have already composed.

#### Step 2:

Distribute this melody to all instruments in the string quartet. The melody can be played in different octaves, this is still a monophonic texture.

Jessie Montgomery uses a monophonic texture at the end of Strum to give the piece a distinctive ending:

The image shows a musical score for a string quartet (Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla, Vc.) in 3/4 time, marked Presto with a tempo of 208. The score illustrates a monophonic texture where all instruments play the same melody. The melody is marked 'on the string' and 'pizz.' (pizzicato). A red bracket spans the first four measures of the score, indicating the monophonic texture. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

excerpt from MONTGOMERY, Jessie, 'Strum' bars 262-266.

## Composing Homophonic Textures

In a homophonic texture, the instruments play different notes that move together at the same time. The combination of notes played together at any time creates a chord, and homophonic textures are based on chords moving together at the same speed. So, to create homophonic textures in your music, you need to have a melody and then build harmonic accompaniments that complement it.

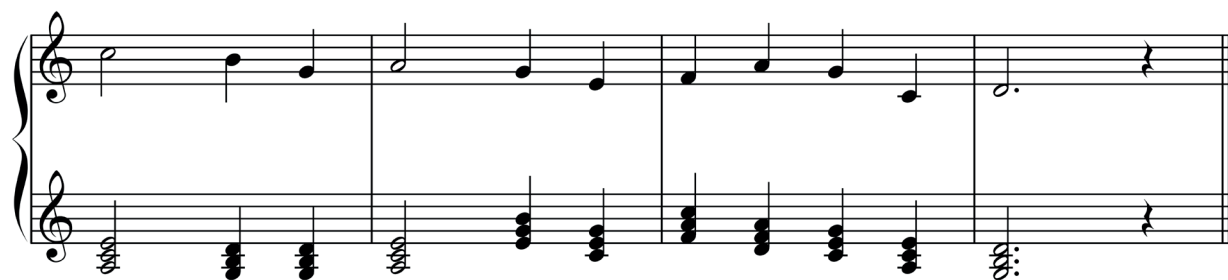
### Step 1:

Choose one of the melodies you have already composed and give this part to the first violin. For example:



### Step 2:

Now experiment by adding accompanying notes to each note in the melody, to build the harmony. One way of doing this is to compose triads to accompany each note in the melody. For example:



### Step 3:

Distribute these accompanying notes to the rest of the instruments in the quartet. The instruments don't have to play these notes at the octaves written above, in fact encourage the students to experiment with the different ranges of the instruments in the quartet. For example:

A musical score for a quartet, showing four staves: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. The Vln. 1 staff has the melody from Step 1. The Vln. 2 staff has a melody: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The Vla. staff has a melody: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The Vc. staff has a melody: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The notes are written on their respective staves.

As you can see, the first violin plays the melody, but the other instruments play different notes that help build the harmony.

## Composing Polyphonic Textures

In polyphonic music, each of the instruments has a melodic line which is equally important. The notes constantly weave in between one another. Follow these steps to compose a short section of polyphonic music:

### Step 1:

Ask your student groups to compose a short 1 or 2 bar melody. You could use the 'Composing Melodies Using Words' exercise above to do this. Here's an example:



### Step 2:

Develop this short melody into a 4 bar melodic passage for one of the instruments in the quartet. You could use composition techniques explained in the 'Developing Your Melodies' exercise above to do this. For example:



### Step 3:

To create polyphonic textures, we need to have two or more independent melodies being played at the same time. However, they can't be two random melodies together, it's important that they work together harmonically. A little trick composers often use in polyphonic music is imitation. This is where one instrument copies something that has just been played by another instrument.

To make the music more interesting, the imitations can have slight changes. For example, they could:

- Be played in a different octave.
- Have ornamentation to create a fancy, decorated version of the original melody.
- Use the same pitches as the original melody, but use notes that are different durations.

Ask your students to experiment using imitation in one or more of the other instrument parts based on something in the 4 bar melodic passage they composed in the previous step. For example:

A polyphonic texture with three staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, and Viola. The first bar shows the original melody in Violin 1. The second bar shows the melody in Viola. The third bar shows the melody in Violin 2. The fourth bar shows the melody in Viola. Red circles highlight the imitated melodies in each instrument part.

Students may find that in order for the imitations to work harmonically, they may need to change some of the pitches in the original melody.

#### Step 4:

Now the students need to fill in the gaps, making sure that each instrument has their own melodic line independent of one another. No single melody should take over the overall sound. For example:

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four measures. Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 have melodic lines with some gaps. Vla. and Vc. have more continuous lines. The Vc. part starts with a 'pizz.' marking. An upward-pointing arrow is centered below the score.

### Try this with your class

Learning objectives: to transform/ to evaluate

#### Activities

This activity will work best in a DAW or notation software.

- Support the group to copy one bar of their original melody, and paste it into a different instrument 1 or 2 bars later. NB many KS3 students do not know how to use copy and paste functions on these softwares, so they may need some help with this.
- Ask the whole group to listen back to this. Do they like it? Are there any crunches or clashes in the harmony that they do not like? Make changes based on this evaluation.
- (Optional) Repeat this process into a third/ fourth instrument.
- When asking students to 'fill in the gaps', support them to use the skills they learned in 'Creating Harmony from a Melody' (page 23). First ask students to fill in the gaps by writing harmony notes in minims or crotchets, then start to think about passing notes between these points. The passing notes may use similar rhythms to the original melodies.
- When listening back as a group, each pair could be responsible for 'listening out' for something different in the music. One pair could be responsible for listening to whether the 'mood' or 'emotion' is in keeping with their ideas for the piece and another pair could be responsible for listening to whether the independent lines are balanced well (no line should take over).

## Melody & Accompaniment

This type of texture is when you can clearly tell which instrument or instruments are playing the melody and which are playing the accompaniment.

### Step 1:

Ask your students to choose one of the melodies they have already composed and give this part to the first violin. For example:



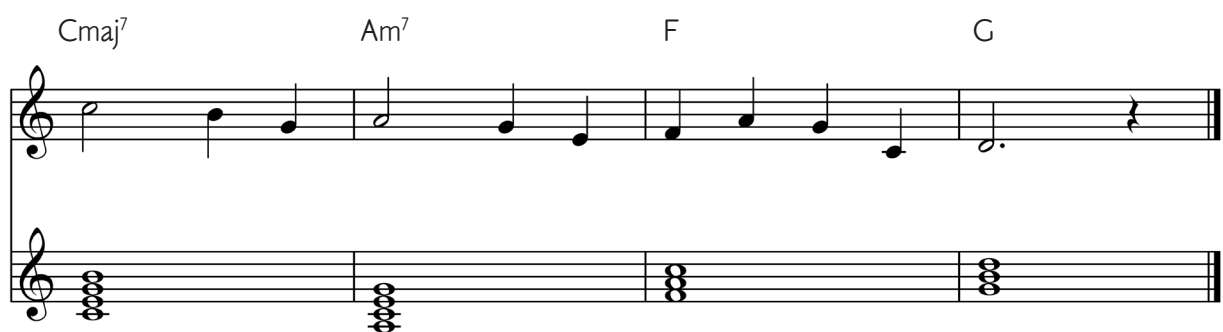
### Step 2:

Students now need to create a chord or harmonic progression to accompany this melody. You can use the 'Creating Harmony From A Melody' exercise above to do this. In my example below, I have written chords above the melody to indicate where I want the changes:

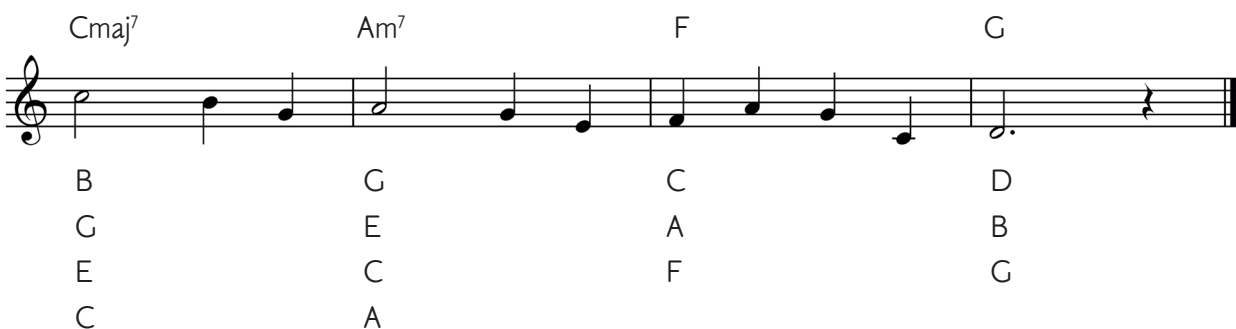


### Step 3:

Students should write down the notes that make up the chords they have chosen (either in notation or letters). For example:



OR







some rhythms in the 2nd violin part, but they are still playing the note from the chord.

The image shows a musical score for a string quartet with four staves: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., and Vc. The Vln. 1 part is in treble clef and plays a sequence of quarter notes. The Vln. 2 part is also in treble clef and plays eighth notes. The Vla. part is in alto clef and plays half notes. The Vc. part is in bass clef and plays quarter notes. The parts are not moving together as a single chord, illustrating a non-homophonic texture.

Notice that in all of the above examples in the melody and accompaniment steps, they are different to a homophonic texture because the accompanying chords are not moving at the same time as the melody.

### Step 7:

Some final thoughts for the students to experiment with are:

- Dynamics: which parts ought to be louder than the others? Do the dynamics change within a part?
- Articulation: how would you like the musicians to play these parts, for example staccato or legato?
- How are the instruments playing their part, for example with the bow (arco) or plucked (pizzicato)?



### Try this with your class

Learning objectives: to document/ to apply

When students are working through their ideas about harmony on a notation software or DAW, it can be helpful to have an additional piano line in the digital score, so that students can keep track of the chords/ harmonies they hope to use, before applying these to the different instruments in the string quartet.

## ACTIVITIES FOR STRUCTURE AND FORM

The students should be thinking about the form of their composition throughout the process. Planning this in advance can help the students to make decisions about ‘what happens next’ in their music.

Students might want to consider classical forms such as Binary, Ternary, Rondo

Or, students might be inspired by structures in pop songs. The phrase structure in pop songs often follows an AB pattern (e.g. ABAB). This could become a verse, which is arranged into verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-chorus.

Or, students might be inspired by the forms in the Key Repertoire.

Something to consider: If your groups have generated lots of disparate material in pairs, consider whether it might be useful to support them to arrange some of this material in line with the structure they have in mind. For example, perhaps one pair’s material could be used to create a new section of the piece (or, perhaps it could be used to develop an existing section by offering a new phrase, or a counter melody).

### Try this with your class

Learning objectives: to analyse

Schubert’s Death and the Maiden (Movement 2) has a very clear theme and variation form. Challenge your students to map the forms of the other pieces of Key Repertoire.

- Listen to Shostakovich String Quartet No. 8 (Movement 2)
- Ask your students how many themes they think are introduced throughout the movement.
- Map these out like a storyboard on the board or on paper, asking students to identify and label any repetition.
- If there is a change in the material (or a new theme is introduced), ask your students to name one or two ways in which it has changed.
- Repeat this process for the other pieces of Key Repertoire.
- Your students could use these structures for their own pieces.

### Try this with your class

Learning objectives: to apply/ to develop

Why not ask your students to map their ideas onto the structures, forms and textures of our Inspiration pieces? As a class, analyse the three ideas Jessie Montgomery uses in the opening 14 bars of ‘Strum’. Use our ‘Montgomery structure’ resource to help.

- Over two or three lessons, ask the students to arrange some existing melodies they have composed into the four parts of a string quartet, guided by the structure Jessie Montgomery uses. Through this activity, your students will develop polyphonic textures. They will harmonise their ideas and develop melodic counterpoint through these exercises.

Resources  
Appendix B  
[Montgomery-  
structure, page  
37]

## BEFORE THE CULMINATION EVENT

During the culmination event, your students will have the chance to workshop their pieces with the String Quartet before they are premiered in a concert later in the day.

This is a chance for your students to engage in a dialogue with the players about how their music is interpreted. Once your students have listened to their piece played by the quartet, they might have ideas about dynamics, articulation and tempo. This is a chance for your students to make some final decisions about their music before it is played in the concert.

Your students will get the most out of this experience if they are prepared to talk about the dynamics, articulation and tempo they imagined for their pieces.

### Try this with your class

Learning objectives: to reflect

- On an A3 piece of paper, ask each group to map out the structure of their piece.
- Ask each group to annotate this structure with words that describe the music. First encourage the students to use their own words.
- Then, choose keywords from below to put on the board (in English is fine!). Ask the students whether any of these words describe their music? If so, ask the groups to add these words to the page (and if any keywords match the words the students have already written, encourage them to pair these words on the page. (Don't erase anything though!)
- Make sure you bring these A3 sheets to the culmination event - the students can use them in the composer workshop to help them talk about their pieces with the musicians.

Resources  
Keywords  
(see  
below).

Keywords	accented	maestoso (majestically)
	agitato (agitated)	pesante (heavy)
pianissimo	andante (slow)	prestissimo (as fast as possible)
piano	animato (animated, lively)	risoluto (bold, strong)
mezzo piano	detached	scherzando (playful, joking)
mezzo forte	energico (energetic)	semplice (simple, plain)
forte	forza (force)	tranquillo (calm)
fortissimo	legato (smooth)	triste, tristamente (sad, sorrowful)
	leggiero (light or nimble)	

## APPENDIX A 'MONTGOMERY STRUCTURE'



# APPENDIX A – MONTGOMERY STRUCTURE

Jessie Montgomery develops the opening 14 bars of Strum using the techniques below. If your students have developed some melodic ideas but need some support with developing them, why not challenge the group to use similar structural devices and techniques to Jessie?

## Step 1

Jessie Montgomery has developed a 2 bar phrase that she gives to the viola in the opening bars. This is introduced as a solo part.

**Andante** ♩ = 100

The musical score for Step 1 is written for five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass (optional). The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The time signature is 7/8. The Viola part plays a melodic line starting with a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) instruction and a 'guitar style (bow in hand)' instruction. The dynamic is marked 'mf'. The phrase consists of two bars of music.

## Step 2

Jessie Montgomery repeats this phrase in the viola exactly, but on the second time it is heard, she develops some harmonic accompaniment in Violin 2.

**Andante** ♩ = 100

The musical score for Step 2 is written for five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass (optional). The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The time signature is 7/8. The Viola part repeats the melodic phrase from Step 1. The Violin II part provides harmonic accompaniment, starting with a 'pizz.' instruction and a 'guitar style (bow in hand)' instruction. The dynamic is marked 'mf'. The phrase consists of two bars of music.

Challenge your students to use repetition and a Melody and Accompaniment texture to develop their music like Jessie. Use the “Creating Harmony From A Melody” on page [?] to help with writing a part for Violin 2.

Violin 2

Harmonic accompaniment A

Viola

Student melodic phrase A

Student melodic phrase A

### Step 3

Jessie repeats the viola phrase again (this is the third time we have heard it). She also repeats the Violin 2 material. Over this, she layers some new material for the cello. This material is a new, slower melody using quavers and crotchets rather than semiquavers and quavers.

Musical score for Step 3. The score is in 7/8 time and consists of four staves: Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Va.), Cello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The Violin II part starts with a *sim.* (sforzando) dynamic and a *p* (piano) dynamic. The Viola part starts with a *p* dynamic. The Cello part starts with a *p sotto voce* dynamic. The Contrabass part is silent throughout the passage.

Could your students write a new melody for the cello? They will need to pick melody notes that fit with the harmony they have created between the Viola and Violin 2. Use the “Composing Melodies From Chords” on page [?] to help.

Violin 2

Harmonic accomp A

Harmonic accomp A

Viola

Melody A

Melody A

Melody A

Cello

Melody B

### Step 4

Jessie repeats this Cello melody exactly too. Again, it is layered with the same material in the Viola and Violin 2 that we have heard before. This time though, Jessie has harmonised the Cello melody - Violin 1 plays the exact same rhythms at the same time, but on different pitches.

Musical score for Step 4. The score is in 7/8 time and consists of four staves: Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Va.), and Cello (Vc.). The Violin I part starts with a *p sotto voce* dynamic. The Violin II part starts with a *violin up* dynamic. The Viola part starts with a *p* dynamic. The Cello part starts with a *p* dynamic.

Could your students create material for Violin 1 in the same way? By this point, students will have made some decisions about harmony, so they can choose notes for Violin 1 that support these previous decisions.

Violin 1				Melody B1 (on different pitches)
Violin 2		Harmonic accomp A	Harmonic accomp A	Harmonic accomp A
Viola	Melody A	Melody A	Melody A	Melody A
Cello			Melody B	Melody B

### Step 5

The third time we hear the cello melody, Jessie uses several techniques that start to move the music to a new place after all of that repetition. The harmony changes and Jessie starts to develop countermelodies between Violin 1 and Cello. She gives them both the same melodic rhythm we have heard previously, but instead of one part being a straightforward harmonisation of the other, she chooses harmony notes for the Cello that will create opposite (or contrary) motion between these two parts.

The musical score shows measures 9 through 12. Measure 9 starts with a 7/8 time signature. Measure 10 changes to 6/8. Measure 11 changes to 3/8. Measure 12 changes to 6/8. The Violin I part starts with *p sotto voce* and *mf*. The Violin II part has *violin up*, *cresc.*, and *mf*. The Viola part has *cresc.* and *mf*. The Cello part has *mf*. Red circles highlight the Violin I and Cello parts in measure 12, showing contrary motion.

Violin 1			Melody B1 (on different pitches)	Melody B1
Violin 2		Harmonic acc. A	Harmonic acc. A	Harmonic acc. A1
Viola	Melody A	Melody A	Melody A	Melody A1
Cello			Melody B	Melody B2 (pitch development)

Can your students change the harmony notes in the Violin 1 or Cello in similar ways? Again, they will use pitches that support the harmonic decisions they have already made. At this point it feels like something is about to happen in the music - ask your students what they think should happen next.

## Contact details

If you'd like to be in touch with us about the contents of this pack or the project in general, please email us at [wecompose@musicintheround.co.uk](mailto:wecompose@musicintheround.co.uk) or call our office on 0114 2814660.

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YouTube: [/musicintheround](https://www.youtube.com/musicintheround)

Reg charity no. 326811

Reg company no. 1880734

## Further resources

All of the resources for this project can be found at [musicintheround.co.uk/wecompose-2024-2025-key-stage-3-resource-hub](http://musicintheround.co.uk/wecompose-2024-2025-key-stage-3-resource-hub) or on our website [www.musicintheround.co.uk](http://www.musicintheround.co.uk).

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With thanks to the Music Services and Music Hubs of Barking & Dagenham, East Yorkshire, Milton Keynes, Portsmouth, South Yorkshire, Portsmouth and the venues Guildhall Trust Portsmouth, Junction Goole, Sheffield Theatres and Stables Milton Keynes.

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