



Photo

Video

Music

Track Hits

Understanding and organizing songs

Most chart hits are developed according to a similar pattern. Successful songs generally employ the same important tools, structures and procedures. Select any chart hit. The music piece should be in a visible musical form with well-defined dynamics and instrumentation. The text should be meaningful and conjure up strong mental imagery.

The duration of the project should be approximately two to three lessons.

Introduction

At the beginning of this unit, the original version should be sung with the pupils. The lyrics should be visibly projected on first hearing.

To help pupils comprehend the lyrics, short questions can be posed or – with the projector switched off – ask the pupils to repeat the song.

The pupils will have learned a variety of facts about the artist (or band). These can all be added to the blackboard.

During renewed hearing of the song, the dynamics and the instrumentation of the song can be developed horizontally on the blackboard. For this, the class can be divided in two groups. While the first concerns itself primarily with the dynamics, the second group can collect sequence and instrumental data.

Song construction

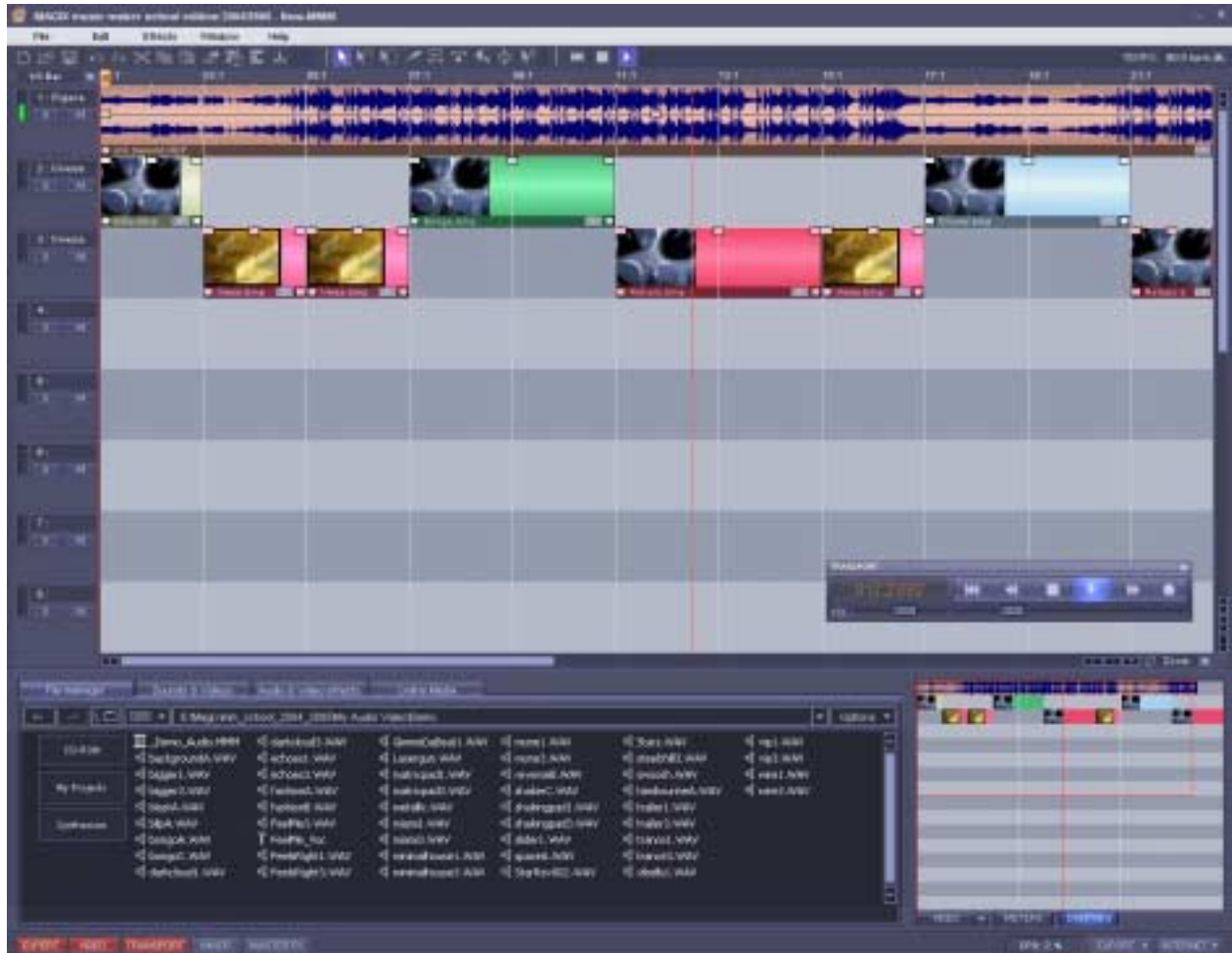
Most songs are suitable for a simple introduction to song construction teaching since most are constructed from three or four parts: Intro, strophe, bridge (transition to the refrain) and refrain. Pupils may cut the song into these parts and assign the lyrics accordingly on renewed hearing of the piece and with help of pre-prepared notes.

Beside the lyrics, a time axis should be inserted. This will be important for the process.



Additionally, illustrations should be provided to exhibit a semantic connection to the greater part of the lyrics. Make picture suggestions, and provide pupils with pictures without a recognizable connection to the lyrics in order to generate discussion.

The task could read: "The pictures and song parts are out of order. Cut it out and re-arrange the lyrics" This task can be worked on in groups of two.





Teamwork

After this phase, the class should be organized into teams. The instructor now becomes a moderator.

The individual teams can be selected and divided by the pupils into the following:

Pantomime Team

Due to the strong imagery of the lyrics, a small team may try to project this as pantomime. It is helpful to supply the pupils with a concrete reason for this –as an aid for the deaf, for example.

Research Team

The research team (without using the information on the blackboard) should construct a dated biography of the artist or band. Encyclopedias and internet search machines ought help. The team should arrange the information onto a montaged placard or chart which is then displayed in the classroom.

Graphic Team

A graphic team that creates its own images for the lyrics is also conceivable. These images can be held or hung up in support of the pantomime team.

Note for technically experienced teachers and teachers: If you have a scanner, you could exchange the illustrations from within the music maker file. For this, the scanned-in pictures must be stored into a file and be integrated with the arrangement in music maker.

This would allow you to make your own song “film” and/or slide show and then to store the result as a video.

Computer Team

On the MUC CD you will find the MAGIX music maker program. First the song concerned must be transferred to the computer. That can be done best from mp3 or can be imported directly from CD. Please note that after the new copyright law, it is no longer possible to read copy-protected CDs into computer software. If problems arise, use older CDs (without copy protection) or use the mp3 or wma file formats.



For the musically and technically experienced:

After you have put the song into the Arranger, the tempo and tact must be analyzed with the Remix Agent. If the material was cut into slices with the Remix Agent, the song can be re-mixed, i.e. individual parts can to be arranged into another sequence or laid over each other. Note: Proceed very carefully at this stage as developing too fast may create unpleasant sound mash.

In order to keep an overview, reserve tracks one and two for the audio material and the remaining tracks for video and images. The papers already worked on will be helpful because the sheets contain exact numerical data for using the individual sections and scanned-in pictures. The pupils need only transfer the vertical time axis from the paper to the horizontal time axis in the computer program. This must be explained first by the instructor. Should videos of the artist be available, you could also integrate these in the Arranger. Simply load and drag & drop them into the Arranger.

The individual elements must now be shifted to their correct position and be adapted to the length of the song. These tasks can all be done with the mouse by shifting them into the center of the colored bars (the pointer becomes a hand). Subsequently, the parts can be moved by holding down the left mouse button. To extend and shorten lyrics and images, the mouse pointer must be led to the right end of the bars, whereby the arrow display changes automatically. The bar can now be extended and/or squeezed at will. If you wish to work even more accurately, the screen resolution can be increased or made smaller via the magnifying glass tool.

Once the material has been roughly arranged, various effects and distortions can be added to the individual elements. The effects menus open by double-clicking. At this point, the creativity of the pupils is limitless. The finished arrangement can also be exported and stored (and at a later stage, reviewed) as a film via "File > arrangement > video as AVI".

Presentation

Finally, all teams should present their results. The Pantomime and Graphic teams can perform parallel to the video demonstration by holding up the pictures at the appropriate times and/or bringing it over in pantomime.