

## **Connect it by Anna Meredith**

### PRIMARY CLASSROOM LESSON PLAN

For:

- Key Stage 2 in England and Wales
- Second Level, P5-P7 in Scotland
- Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2 in Northern Ireland

*Written by Rachel Leach*

#### *Background*

**The composer:** **Anna Meredith (b. 1978)**

- British composer and performer
- Born in London, grew up in Scotland, studied in York and at Royal College of Music

**The music:** **Connect It**

- Written in 2014 especially for BBC Ten Pieces.
- Doesn't contain any instruments at all, just body percussion and vocal sounds

#### *Learning outcomes*

Learners will:

- listen and reflect on a piece of orchestral music
- invent their own musical motifs and structure them into a piece
- perform as an ensemble
- learn musical language appropriate to the task

#### *Curriculum checklist*

- play and perform in ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments
- improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
- listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory

### *Glossary of music terms used*

<b>Canon</b>	everyone performs the same material but begins at different times (also known as a 'round')
<b>Motif</b>	a small musical idea
<b>Orchestrate</b>	choose which instruments perform which parts of the music
<b>Pitched percussion</b>	percussion instruments that can play different pitches – xylophones, glockenspiels, chime bars etc.
<b>Pulse</b>	the steady "beat" underneath much music made up of notes of the same length (like a ticking clock or steady footsteps)
<b>Unpitched percussion</b>	percussion instruments that can only make a limited number of sounds – drums, shakers woodblocks, tambourine etc.

### *Resources required*

- Classroom percussion instruments and any other instruments that your children might be learning
- A large space

*This scheme of work is plotted out over six lessons. Feel free to adapt it to suit your children and the resources you have available.*

## The six lessons at a glance

### Lesson 1:

Activities:	Listen and watch the full performance and introductory film and discuss Learn motifs from Anna Meredith's piece and perform them Learn about canon
Curriculum link:	Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory Appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians Develop an understanding of the history of music

### Lesson 2:

Activities:	Create body percussion motifs
Curriculum link:	Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

### Lesson 3:

Activities:	Create short pieces from motifs Create a canon
Curriculum link:	Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

### Lesson 4:

Activities:	Orchestrate ideas Use technical terminology
Curriculum link:	Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

## **Lesson 5:**

Activities:                   Orchestrate ideas  
                                  Use technical terminology

Curriculum link:        Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music  
                                  Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression

## **Lesson 6:**

Activities:                   Structure ideas into a bigger piece  
                                  Perform in front of an audience

Curriculum link:        Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression  
                                  Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music

# LESSON 1

## Watching and listening and doing!

### 1. Prepare your class

Explain to your class that you are going to begin a 6-week music project focusing on a fantastic piece of music by a composer called Anna Meredith and **watch** the introductory film with Anna and Dev

### 2. Teach these four patterns, borrowed from Anna's piece –

The image shows four musical patterns on a staff. Pattern 1 is a quarter note in 3/4 time, labeled 'rub your hands together'. Pattern 2 consists of four quarter notes: 'sweep hands up' (with 'shh!' sound effect), 'flick fingers', 'sweep hands down' (with 'ssss!' sound effect), and 'tap knees'. Pattern 3 consists of six quarter notes: 'tap body, moving upwards', 'cross', and 'clap' (with 'yeah!' sound effect). Pattern 4 consists of two quarter notes: 'cross' and 'clap' (with 'yeah!' sound effect).

... and practise performing each one four times

3. **Challenge your children** to perform each pattern four times back-to-back before moving onto the next one. You might like to choose someone to play a steady pulse as you do this, or just stand and count the patterns out loud.

4. **Split the class into four teams**, and try this as a canon or round. (A canon is the same as a round, the term describes a piece where the same material is performed by different teams but with staggered starts.)

*Start the first group on their own. When they move on to pattern 2 start the second group, when they move on start the third group etc. The groups will stop at different times.*

5. **Once this is achieved**, re-do but this time, ask the groups to continue looping pattern 4 until everyone is doing it at the same time. You'll need to put in place a good signal for stop to ensure everyone stops at the same time after this looping!

6. **Finally**, when everyone is really confident with these patterns, arrange the class in a large circle and perform them as a 'Mexican' wave. One person starts pattern 1 when they move to pattern 2, the person on their begins pattern 1 etc. Before you perform this, ask your children to decide what happens at the end. Do they continue looping pattern 4 until everyone is together again, or stop one by one? They might choose to end like Anna's real piece, with a loud "Yeah!" from everyone.

**Decide on your favourite version** (canon, wave, altogether) and write it down.

## LESSON 2

### Names, syllables, patterns

1. **Warm-up.** Begin with your class sitting in a large circle. Pass a clap around the circle and then ask the children what next? Encourage them to suggest other body percussion or vocal sounds to pass around or perform altogether. Take any and all suggestions made, if they don't work you'll find out by trying them!
2. **Remind the class** of the patterns from Anna Meredith's piece that you explored last week. If you have time, perform it again
3. Now, **lead a simple name game**; ask everyone to say their name with a gesture in turn around the circle. Encourage your children to say their names loudly and proudly!
4. **Next, ask everyone to say just a part of their name with a gesture** and go around the circle hearing these. Demonstrate first how to choose one part of the name (one syllable) and how that sound can be stretched out. For example, MELISSA might become 'ssssss-A'

*This is an excellent opportunity to teach or remind your children about syllables!*

5. **Lastly**, ask your pupils to add a body percussion sound to their syllable and gesture. So they might end up with something like –  
*'ssssssssssssssssss - A'*  
*move hand like a snake – clap*
6. **Go around the circle** a few times hearing these until everyone has something and can perform it confidently.
7. **Split the class into small groups.** Ask each group to join their ideas together to make a new pattern. The pattern must include –
  - a) At least 1 syllable
  - b) At least 1 gesture
  - c) At least 1 body percussion sound...but the more of each of these elements, the better
8. **Bring the class back together** and hear each group one by one. Give feedback and tweak the pieces making sure that everyone knows exactly what they are doing. Explain that they have made new musical 'motifs' (a motif is just a small musical idea)
9. **Finally, give out big paper and pens** and ask each group to write down their motif. This could be as a list of events, a diagram or they could invent a symbol to describe it. However they do it, they must be able to remember it for next lesson

# LESSON 3

## Canon

1. **Warm up.** To get some energy into the room, challenge your groups to remember their 'name-motifs' from last week and perform them whilst travelling across the room so you create a mad, swirling carnival of ideas
2. **Ask your children if they can remember what a 'canon' is.** If they can't, demonstrate by either singing a canon or round they all know (*Frere Jacques* or *London's Burning* perhaps), or using one of their motifs.

*I.e. teach one of their longer motifs to the whole circle, start one side of the circle and ask them to loop it, start the other side halfway through.*

3. **Ask your class to suggest ways they could use their motifs to make a bigger piece** and make a quick list of suggestions on the board. They might say things such as:
  - Make a canon
  - Make a Mexican wave (this is just a canon with the parts entering very quickly after each other)
  - Fragment the motif (break it up into separate sounds again)
  - Repetition
  - Overlap two motifs
  - Perform ideas backwards
  - Build up from one sound, adding a new sound each repeat until you have the full idea
  - Add rhythm
4. **Split back into your groups** and ask each group to make a short piece using their motif, other motifs and perhaps borrowing from the Meredith motifs they learnt in lesson 1. They must use at least one of the ideas on the list above.
5. **Bring the class back together** and hear each group one by one. Give gentle feedback. **Finish the lesson** by encouraging each team to write down what they have done.

# LESSON 4

## Orchestration 1

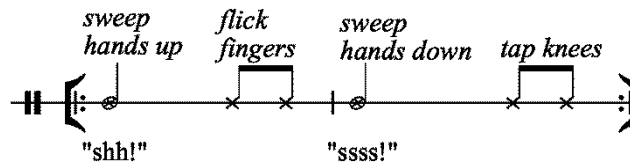
1. **Warm up.** Begin once again in a circle and place a varied selection of percussion instruments into the middle of your circle. Remind your class of the following pattern from lesson 1 –



2. **Ask your class** to keep this going and move their hands up to one ear and really listen to the sound.
3. **Select a volunteer** to come forward and choose an instrument from the selection that can make a similar sound. Try out several until everyone has agreed on the best choice

**Explain that this is called 'orchestration'** – the process of choosing which instrument plays which part of a piece. It is rather similar to colouring in a black and white picture.

4. **Repeat this process** with this pattern –



You will need more than one instrument to make all of these sounds. Again, keep trying out ideas until your class are satisfied that they have the perfect combination

5. **Continue working in this way** until you have orchestrated all four patterns from lesson 1. Double up ideas so that everyone will have an instrument and a part to play
6. **Practise performing these patterns as follows** –
  - Repeat each pattern four times
  - Move from pattern to pattern without a gap in between
  - As a four part canon
  - As a Mexican wave.

... just as you did in lesson 1 on body percussion.

7. **Ask your class** to decide on their favourite version (they might even like to invent a new structure) and write it down carefully. Also write down who played what. **Finish this lesson** by playing through your orchestrated piece one more time.



# LESSON 5

## Orchestration 2

1. **Warm up** - Sitting in a circle, with children from each group sat together, ask each group to quickly remember their body percussion piece from lesson 3 and have some fun layering them up perhaps over a pulse played on a woodblock.
2. **Ask your children to get the same instrument that they had last week** for the orchestration task and remind them of the process of orchestration they completed using Anna Meredith's motifs.
3. **Split back into groups**, and ask each group to orchestrate the piece they made in lesson 3 - i.e. choose which instrument, from the ones they have, fits which sound. Discourage any instrument swapping at this stage
4. **Bring the groups back together** and hear each orchestrated piece one by one. Give feedback and make tweaks.
5. **Finish this session** with everyone carefully writing down what they have done.

## LESSON 6

### Structure and performance

- 1. Warm up.** Begin the lesson with a quick focusing warm-up like pass the clap and then make a list on the board of all the elements you have made so far. It should look something like this –
  - **Everyone:** Anna Meredith's motifs on body percussion
  - **Groups:** Short 'name-motif' pieces on body percussion
  - **Everyone:** Anna Meredith's motifs orchestrated
  - **Groups:** Short 'name-motif' pieces orchestrated
- 2. Get the instruments out** and put all of these elements back together. Remember the shape of the Anna Meredith sections (canon? wave? etc.)
- 3. Ask your children** to come up with an order for these sections and fashion them into one big piece. If they want to discard anything at this point, that's ok. They may choose to make a piece that is just body percussion (like Anna's) and scrap the instruments for example.
- 4. Remind your class** of some of the techniques Anna uses –
  - Canon
  - Mexican wave
  - Moving across the space
  - Everyone ending together
- 5. Try out several versions** until you have found the best one and practice it until it is the same every time and everyone knows exactly what they are doing.
- 6. Finally,** invite another class in to watch you perform your new composition

# TAKING IT FURTHER

## Cross-curricular activities

- **LISTENING:** A great companion piece to Connect It is Kerry Andrew's No Place Like (another BBC Ten Pieces commission!)
- **ART:** Make a graphic score of your new piece by inventing abstract symbols for all of the new motifs.

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