



COMPOSING WITH MUSIC TECH

JAMIE LIDDLE

HEAD OF MUSIC, STEWART'S MELVILLE COLLEGE

Case study - Pupil A



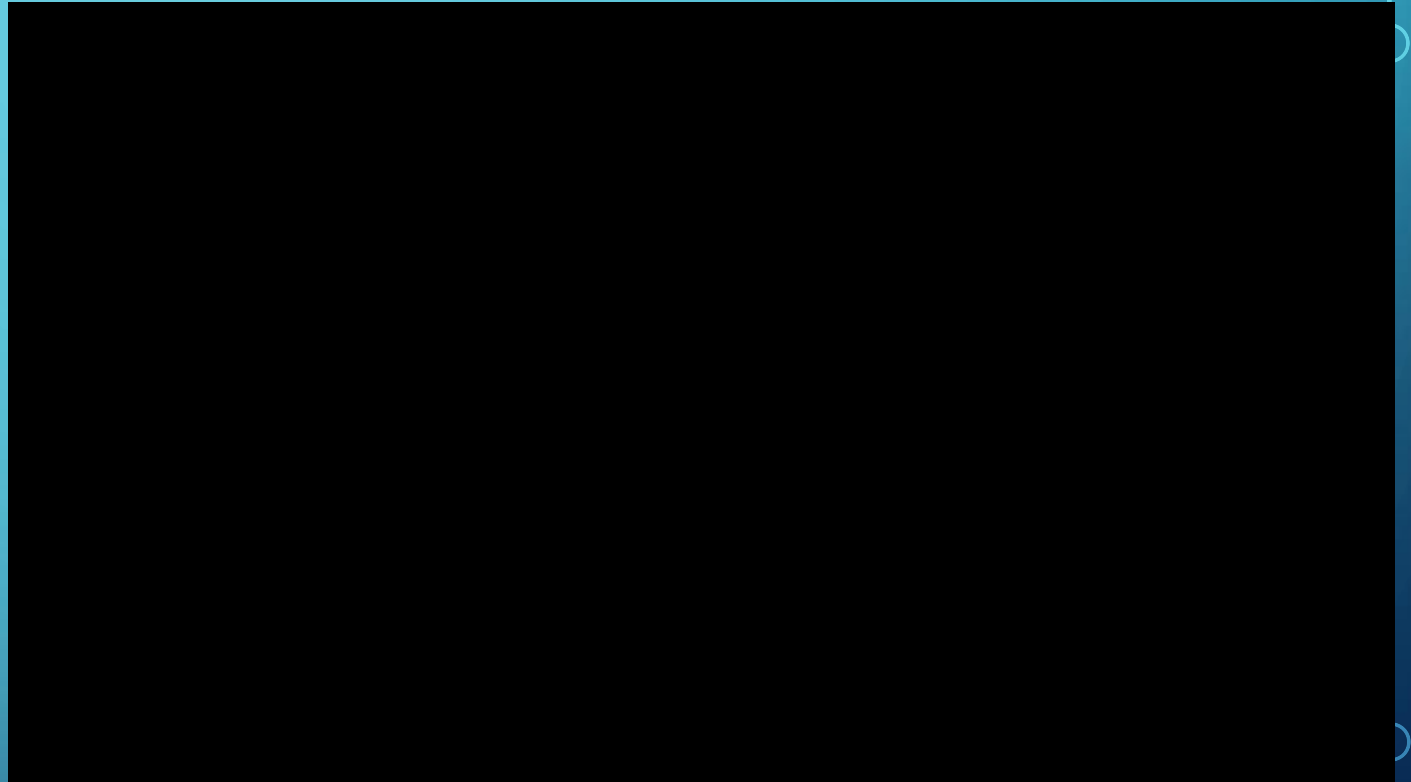
- Excellent guitarist; piano 2nd instrument.
- Interested in classic 'prog' Rock
- Learns from TAB and by ear.
- Does read music, but struggled with notated compositions

Analysis: Rush, <i>La Villa Stangiato</i>			
Melody/ Harmony	Rhythm/Tempo	Texture/ Structure/ Form	Timbre/ Dynamics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Intro begins in harmonic minor, then improvisation in the Phrygian mode- Song is modal and there are some unusual modulations- At 6:13, 6:23 and 9:26 there are similar descending chromatic progressions- Finishes off-tonic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Intro has no clear time signature or tempo- Section starting at 0:27 is allegro, 4/4- Section starting at 3:16 is in 7/8 - irregular time signature- Section at 6:09 has time signature changes	<p>The piece has a very unusual "episodic" structure, mostly different sections, although the "Strangiato Theme" and "Monsters!" sections are reprised</p>	<p>Acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass guitar, synths, drum kit, tenor vocals</p> <p>Distortion, reverb</p>



1. Modal harmony
2. Episodic structure
3. Irregular time signatures
4. Time signature changes

Pupil A - resources



Tech workflow – benefits

1. Guide tracks help generate initial ideas quickly

- MUCH less of the “blank screen of death . . .”

2. Developing ideas into larger structures can be easier

- Easier to visualize
- Easier to experiment

Using tech to help workflow can help with these perennial “crunch” areas

The best benefit . . .

3. Significantly improves independent learning

- Pupils excited about composition
- Composing in their own time
- Using software at home



DAWs (Digital Audio Workstations)	Cost	Why use it?	Notes
<u>Reaper</u>	Unlimited free trial; \$60 license (per seat)	Incredibly powerful, full spec DAW. Runs very light – doesn't need massive spec.	HUGE amount of exceptional training content; 100s of videos.
<u>Ableton Live Intro</u>	Free (normally £70)	Pupils LOVE it, especially with a <u>Novation Launchpad</u> . Particularly good for electronic music . . .	Excellent range of built-in sounds and loops
<u>Bandlab (for Education)</u>	Free	Browser-based and accessible anywhere Looks like Garageband . . . “Closed” environment; easy to set class work	We use with S1/2, not SQA phase Can suffer from latency when recording audio.

VSTs etc.	Plugin	What does it do?	Notes
<u>Native Instruments Complete Start (production suite)</u>	Kontakt Player	Content library – standalone and plugin	- Kontakt Factory selection - Play series selection - Other 3 rd party content
	Guitar Rig 6 Player	Great amp + effects simulator	Limited range of presets, but very useful
<u>Spitfire Audio</u>	<u>BBC SO Discover</u>	Full playable symphonic sample library, in dedicated player/plugin.	Excellent samples – great for “background” orchestral textures.
	<u>LABs</u>	Curated collection of presets – orchestral, choirs, pads, Uilleann pipes	Continually expanding selection Great for quick inspiration.