



TEACHER SUPPORT PACK

A message from composer Charlotte Harding...

“At the start of every Convo workshop and rehearsal, I have asked the participants the same question ... *‘why is music a universal means of communication?’*. The answer is always the same - that wherever or whoever you are, music is a language that we all understand and an invaluable tool in our communication with each other. Convo explores the history and diversity of music as a means of communication and in doing so, aims to present a wealth of materials and opportunities for collaborative, creative and inclusive music making.

These resources include exercises relating to composition, listening, lyric writing and group discussion based on the different sections and pieces that make up Convo. Each exercise includes variations for SEND, Primary and Secondary level students and most are suitable for both vocalists and instrumentalists. There are also further ideas for connecting the piece and project to various other areas of the curriculum.

A huge thank you to our partner organisations (English Folk Dance and Song Society, Sonic Pi and Inspire Works), as well as the Royal College of Music Museums and Library and the Royal Albert Hall Archives, for all the wonderful additional content they have supplied.

I hope your students will enjoy using these resources and make some incredible music together. “

Charlotte

Convo – About the Piece

“From our earth’s beginnings, to the connected world we live in today, music has always been a universal means of communication. From bird songs to love songs, ancient scores to film scores, Morse code to coding, ‘Convo’ explores how music gives us all a voice and our lives a soundtrack.”

Earth Calling

An exploration of the early beginnings of music as a means of communication

I: **Earth Calling** – introductory song to the movement

II: **Avian** – a birdsong-inspired choral feature

III: **Talking Drums** – a conversational rhythmic piece, featuring percussion ensembles, massed choir body percussion and *Inspire Works*

IV: **Roots** – a folk song on the theme of identity, featuring the *TBMH Folk Ensemble*

Pen to Paper

An exploration of the development of notated music, from the early cuneiform tablets of the Ancient Near East, through to Western orchestral and contemporary graphic scores

V: **Pen to Paper** – introductory song to the movement

VI: **Hymn to Nikkal** – a love song inspired by the earliest known example of notated music, featuring the *TBMH Chamber Choir*

VII: **The Mountain - Part 1** – a programmatic orchestral piece featuring the *TBMH Youth Orchestra*

VIII: **The Mountain - Part 2** – a graphic score interpretation of ‘The Mountain’

Devices

An exploration of communication through music and technology

IX: **Devices** – introductory song to the movement

X: **Dashes & Dots** – turning Morse code into music

XI: **A Crazy Composer** – a silent film score (to be performed to picture), featuring the *TBMH Youth Orchestra*

XII: **Vibe** – a modern dance track, featuring the *TBMH AKA Choir*, and the computer music coding software *Sonic Pi*

XIII: **Voices** – the Convo anthem, ‘*Hear Our Voices*’

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This Support Pack is intended to be used in conjunction with the Lesson Resource Pack, providing additional information about some aspects of *Convo* and giving ideas for further areas of study.

1. Earth Calling

ABOUT: INSTRUMENTS THROUGH TIME

Primary, Secondary & SEND

For centuries, musical instruments have been made from materials from the earth.

What are these instruments and what materials are they made out of?

Qing

These sonorous stones (or stone chimes) are usually part of a set of different sized stones, called Bianqing. They are usually played by more than one person, hung on large wooden frames and struck with a wooden mallet. They originate from China and were used mainly during rituals or in court music. This Qing is made of slate and engraved, with some colour characters in red and gold on each side.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrLjz7D8jwQ>



Bones

Musical bones are simply a pair of animal bones (this picture shows 4 pairs) that are used as percussion because of their 'clacking' noise when they are hit together.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMokBr9cTxM>

How music has been a means of communication throughout history

Nowadays we like to play or listen to music simply because we enjoy it. However, throughout history humans have also used music to communicate with each other, and we still do today! But how can we communicate through music?

Music is a group of sounds that have been arranged in a certain way. We have lots of sounds to choose from; high and low sounds, loud and soft sounds, long and short sounds, and so many more!

What makes each musical instrument sound different? Several things affect the sound that musical instruments can make; its size and shape, the materials it is made from and how it is played. For example, little instruments (like a whistle) make high sounds, and big instruments (like the double bass) make low sounds. Instruments made out of wood sound different to instruments made out of metal. And when we pluck a string on a guitar it sounds very different to when we blow into the mouthpiece of a trumpet!

How different instruments/musical methods have been used

What can we communicate through music? Some cultures have used musical instruments like drums, horns and bells to *send messages* to each other, probably because the sounds they make can be heard from quite far away.

This animal horn has been beautifully carved and turned into a musical instrument. When you blow into a horn like this you can make a few loud sounds, perfect for short, urgent messages.



For example, on the battlefield you could call out orders like *retreat* or *attack*! Or, during an animal hunt, a horn call might send a message to say *the deer has escaped*!

Can you imagine using your musical instrument to send a message to your friend?

We can also use music to *communicate meaning, like feelings or emotions*. Some pieces of music make us feel happy or sad. Composers will often write a piece of music based on something they are feeling. When we hear their music, we could feel the same emotion that the composer felt when he wrote it, or we could feel something completely different. That is what makes music so wonderful!

You can find these objects in the **Royal College of Music Museum** collections. The Museum is currently being rebuilt and is due to reopen in 2020 with a brand new display and activities for schools and families.

4. Talking Drums

ABOUT: TALKING DRUMS



Talking drum: these hour-shaped drums are known by different names throughout West Africa, such as 'rondo', 'malanga' or 'ewe'. The drums vary in size from region to region, and some have only just a small pitch range while others can play over an octave. Originally used as a drum for communication (mimicking the pitches of African tonal languages), talking drums are now a popular instrument in mbalax music, and can be played in quite a virtuosic style. The Wolof, who are the largest ethnic group in Senegal, call the drum a 'tama' and it is usually referred to by this name in the context of mbalax music.

Ga people: also known as the Ga-Adangbe, this ethnic group accounts for approximately 8% of the population of Ghana and lives predominantly in the Greater Accra Plains. Their love of music and dance is inherent in their culture, and their most popular style of traditional music and dance is named kpanlogo after the drum.

Ewe people: the Ewe are known for their high-quality weaving as well as the high level of importance they place on music and dance in their society. Each village has a chief who was traditionally the son of the previous chief but is today usually elected. Traditionally the chief is supposed to abstain from drinking alcohol and to keep his head covered in public, to remain 'pure' and to allow him to communicate with the ancestors.

Ewe drums: these are often compared to a family – the kagan with the highest pitch is like the child, the deeper kidi is the mother and the atsimevu, which is very tall at over 4-feet, is the grandfather and is played by the master drummer. However, the master drummer may play different lead of master drums for each piece, such as sogo (*soe-goe*), kroboto (*kro-bo-toe*) or totodzi (*toe-toe-jee*).

Tonal drums: some Ghanaian drums (such as the talking drum, kidi or atsimevu) can imitate the tonal languages spoken in Ghana. In a tonal language, the pitch of each word or syllable is very important in working out the meaning of a word. The same word can be spoken with a different pitch and have a different meaning! (This contrasts with English which, as a pitch-accented language, relies more on the placement of accents and stresses to create meaning.)

Links:

Explanation & demo of talking drum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDSPPHGht5s>

Baaba Maal's (mbalax musician) talking drummer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rk-IZnRk2S0>

5. Roots

ABOUT: FOLK SONG TRADITION

Folk song

There is no solid agreement about what is and isn't a folk song. The term was first coined in the mid-19th Century to describe the music of 'the people', which really just meant the songs people knew and chose to sing for their own and other's entertainment in a world without recorded music, TV or internet – they came from all kinds of sources – professional and amateur songwriters, plays, song sheets, books and more but often people learned them from one another.

When we talk about folk songs we usually mean traditional songs, often many years old, where the known authorship of the song is of far less importance to the people who choose to sing it than its content. Many folk songs began as authored, printed sources but now are of anonymous or forgotten authorship. They have often been passed from singer to singer aurally as part of a continuing oral tradition.

English folk song

English folk song is drawn from a broad range of sources, linked by the common theme that the songs that have come down to us were popular within their community. Though some material deals with local and specifically English events or themes, songs popular in England were also popular in other parts of Britain and circulated aurally and by print, so there is no real separation between songs in the English language.

The text above is from The Beginner's Guide to Folk Song on the EFDSS Resource Bank:

<https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/beginners-guide/song#efdss-english-folk-song-introduction>

Expressing identity through folk song

People use song as a way to communicate what is happening in their lives. The songs may reference the names of people, places, a moment in history, a local myth or a famous disaster. These songs mark our social history and give us great insight into the lives of people across the centuries living in England and what was important to them.

Rooted in the past, some songs are hundreds of years old, they continue to grow, change and spread across the world as people continue to learn, sing and share them. Songs evolve and grow new roots in new places, just like language.

Songs change shape with every performer who sings them. Everyone has their own unique musical voice. For example, we sing with different accents, at different speeds, we might change the rhythm or add different lyrics to make it relevant to us. We may add more musical notes,

ornaments or fills. A song may have its roots in England, and have travelled across the world, sung by many different people and evolved into something very different!

Once someone shares a folk song with you it becomes yours to interpret, adapt and continue giving life to by sharing with others.

Folk song collecting and Cecil Sharp House

In the late 19th and early 20th century there was a popular upsurge in interest in folk music and song. Cecil Sharp and other collectors decided to collect folk songs and tunes from the rural communities so they didn't die out when radio and other forms of entertainment were becoming popular. In 1903, famous folk song collectors, Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams, collected his first folk songs in Somerset.



Cecil Sharp collecting songs in the Appalachians

In 1930, Cecil Sharp House, the first dedicated folk arts centre in the UK, was opened in Camden, London, as a memorial to Cecil Sharp following his death in 1924. It continues to be the home of the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), founded in 1932 to preserve, promote and develop the English folk arts, and specifically song, tune and dance.

Resources for the classroom

Below are links to some of the many songs listed in our Resource Bank with audio, notation and teaching guidance.

Key Stage 1 - An Acre of Land Teachers pack

<https://media.efdss.org/resourcebank/docs/RB005AnAcreofLand-KS1.pdf>

‘An Acre of Land’

A great example of a nonsense song, with a simple accompanying dance.

Key Stage 2 - A Sailors Life: Unit 5 Long Distance Love

<https://media.efdss.org/resourcebank/docs/RB232SLKS2-U5LongDistanceLove.pdf>

‘Adieu Sweet Lovely Nancy’ and ‘Bold Riley’

Two beautiful folk songs about missing loved ones at sea.

Key Stage 3 - Using Folk Song in Secondary Schools

<https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/using-folk-music-in-secondary-schools>

'Wild and Wicked Youth / In Newry Town'

Pages 9 - 12

A narrative song full of references to place, perfect for re-writing with Year 7 and 8.

Songs of Rural Life: accessibility and adaptability in SEN settings

<https://media.efdss.org/resourcebank/docs/RB222SongsOfRuralLifeSEN-CatKelly.pdf>

'A Country Life' and 'Daddy Fox'

This pack demonstrates how folk songs can be easily adapted for use in SEN settings.

Find these and many more free downloadable resources on the EFDSS Resource Bank:

www.efdss.org/resourcebank



ABOUT: FOLK MUSIC AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

The Royal Albert Hall, whose reputation as a live music venue was widely known since opening in 1871, presented folk dance for the first time on 1 January 1927 when the English Folk Dance Society brought their Folk Festival to the Hall.

In 1932 The English Folk Dance Society merged with the Folk Song Society, forming The English Folk Dance and Song Society. Under this new organisation the Folk Festival continued to grow in popularity, becoming an annual event at the Hall in early January as well as making frequent visits at other times during the year. After a hiatus during the Second World War, the Festival continued and by the early 1950s the Festival had expanded into a two day event, performed over Friday and Saturday.

Despite being a restoration of a traditional practice, the revival in folk music and dance was not static in terms of progress. The Folk Festival provided an opportunity to perform new music and dances in continuity with tradition, and to share them with other teams. In 1980 a dance was performed entitled *'The Streets of London'*; one of the most unusual features of the performance was a dance involving dustbins as props!



The Festival did not confine itself only to the Folk traditions of the British Isles. From the earliest days of the Festival's conception many performers from the continent performed their native dances. Traditions from Belgium, France, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Macedonia, Russia and many others were all performed under the Royal Albert Hall's glass dome at the Folk Festival. For many members of the audience in the early years of the Festival, the international performers provided something of great excitement in an age before mass travel. The exotic dances were one of the closest experiences the British audience had of lands beyond the coast.



Royal Albert Hall



City of Westminster

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
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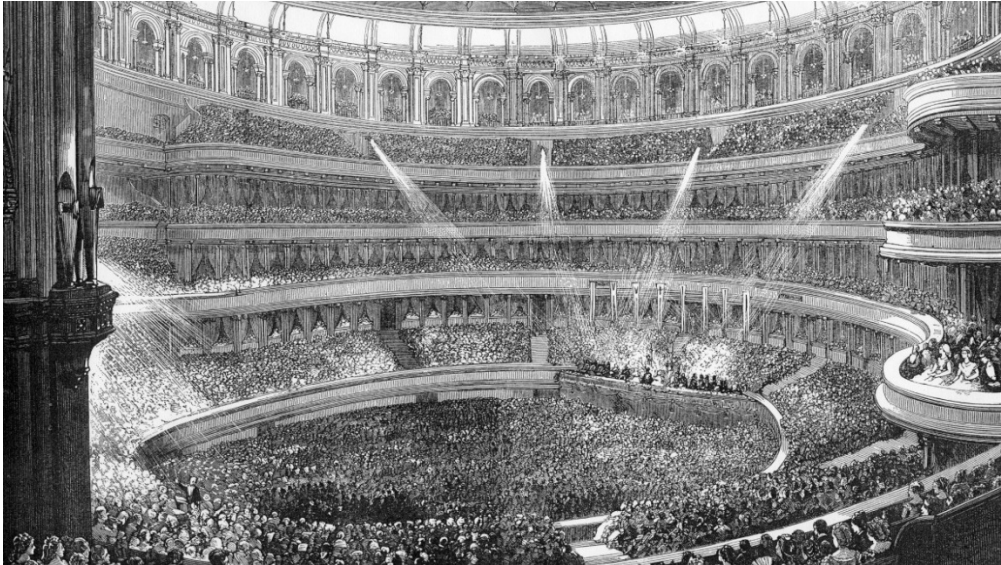
Supported using public funding by

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for EducationARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



10. Devices

ABOUT: ELECTRICITY AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL



When the Royal Albert Hall opened in 1871 it had 11,000 gas burners could be lit in 10 seconds by electric sparks igniting the clusters of gas jets which hung from the roof of the Hall.

Two years after the opening, the Hall hosted, on 3 July 1873, a private visit by the Shah of Persia to see a demonstration of electricity. The Hall was decorated with laurel wreaths and silk banners, including one with the Persian device of the Lion and Sun. The electric lighting demonstration was the first ever use of electric lighting at the Hall, and was shown from five points in the gallery. The lighting used five lamps, each connected to a battery of 50 cells, placed on the Hall's roof, making altogether 250 cells.

At the end of that same year permission was given by the Hall's Council to, '...exhibit an electric light on the Roof of the Main Porch'. On 19 March 1874 the Orchestra for a Royal Choral Society concert of Sullivan's 'Light of the World' was lit by electric light and the Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens was illuminated from 19:00-20:00.

In 1875 the Hall established an Electric Lighting Committee to consider the future use of electricity in the Hall. There were concerns that the seatholders would not like it and that the cost would be prohibitive. At least four seatholders objected, one going so far as to write to The Times newspaper anonymously in 1879, declaring electricity '*a very ghastly and unpleasant innovation*'.

Eventually electric lighting was installed in the Hall in 1888.

11. Dashes & Dots

ABOUT: MORSE CODE AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Just over a year after the Royal Albert Hall had been opened, the first demonstration of Morse code apparatus by the Society of Telegraph Engineers and Commissioners was held in the auditorium, on 18 July 1872. The Society demonstrated Morse Code with a direct link via Persia to Karachi from where the Grand Vizier of Persia sent a message to the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII).

Mr W H Preece, Divisional Engineer, Postal Telegraph Department, said, "*The public itself is becoming familiarised with telegraphy. The feelings of fear and alarm which once accompanied every telegram, are now more frequently converted into those of surprise and joy, for the wires have become the vehicle of communications as much for our little household joys as for the greatest concerns of State....*" (Taken from Communications: An International History of the Formative Years, by Russell W Burns)



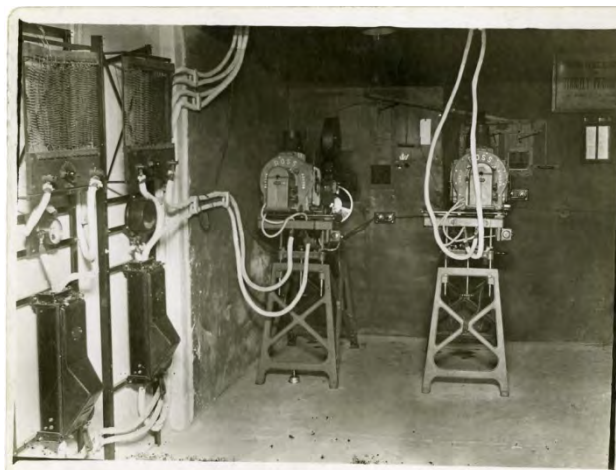
12. A Crazy Composer

ABOUT: FILMS AND MUSIC AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

For more than a century, films have been shown in the Royal Albert Hall's iconic auditorium. The Hall's first ever screening was on 21 October 1905. The movie was *Our Navy, 1805-1905*, and the occasion was the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

The Hall has been putting films with live orchestral accompaniments for almost 100 years. The first such event was *Southern Love – Amor Fantasma*, a long-forgotten movie directed by Willy Engel-Berger and accompanied by the London Symphony Orchestra in 1924.

The Hall's modern film-and-live-orchestra programme was spectacularly relaunched in 2009 with the sell-out success of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. Its two sequels were presented in 2010, to a similarly rapturous reception. The Hall's exciting film-and-live-orchestra programme continues with screenings including *Back to the Future*, *Ratatouille*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Brassed Off*, *Harry Potter*, *Jurassic Park*, *The Godfather*, *Jaws*, and *Disney Fantasia*.



Early images of the Hall's film projector system



Modern film projection at the Hall today



Insterstellar with live orchestra (2015)



Royal Albert Hall



City of Westminster



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA



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13. Vibe

ABOUT: MUSIC CODING

All instruments are a form of technology. The piano was an incredible piece of technical engineering in its time. Code is just a new material (in addition to brass, wood and strings) for constructing new forms of musical instruments.

Technology has continually provided us with new musical instruments to communicate through. From the basic drum to the levers and mechanics of a piano, new instruments have increased our palette of expression.

Sonic Pi is a free software environment that turns code into music. This means it's both a tool for learning to code and also a new kind of musical instrument. It is simple to learn, yet very rich, powerful and expressive when mastered.

Code has the potential to help us imagine and build new instruments that offer affordances that no other instrument has. Major benefits of this approach include combining traditionally separate concepts such as "instrument", "composer", "composition", "performer", "conductor", "notation" in completely new and unique ways that not only allow us to create pieces that perform or compose themselves, but also compositions that are also instruments that offer new interfaces suitable for live performance by humans.

For more discussion around this area, you might want to check out:

<http://sonic-pi.net/files/articles/Live-Coding-Education.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TK1mBqKvlyU>

CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS

EARTH CALLING

'Avian' (Science/Biology)

- The science of 'bird songs' and 'bird calls' and how those fundamentals of communication are reflected in our modern methods of communication
- Different species of birds and their characteristics and habitats etc.
- Identifying different bird calls (listening skills)

'Talking Drums' (World Music, History/Culture, Geography)

- The history and culture of using rhythmic instruments as a means of communication
- Different uses of drums in societies around the world
- African culture and tradition - West African talking drums etc

'Roots' (Language and Literature/History/Geography)

- Music as a form of identity and self-expression
- The folk songs of London and how they relate to its history
- The different languages used in folk songs, and their social and historical context
- How music can convey the identity of a region/country

PEN TO PAPER

'Hymn to Nikkal' (History/Language and Literature/Geography)

- The history and geography of the Ancient Near East (the Mesopotamia period)
- The religions and cultures of the Ancient Near East (gods and goddesses/astrology/rituals/ethics) and their relation to music
- Song lyrics – their construction, meaning and structure (rhyme/rhythm etc.)

'The Mountain – Part 1' (Music History/History of Communication)

- The history of music notation - from cuneiform tablets, to neumes, to modern western scores

- The invention of paper, pencils, pens, printing presses and their impact on the development of communication
- The development of music ensembles

'The Mountain – Part 2' (Art)

- Exploration of the connections between visual and sound art

DEVICES

'Dashes and Dots' (Science and Technology/History/Maths)

- The science of electricity and early forms of electrical communication
- The invention of Morse code and its role in history (World War I/II)
- The mathematics behind music (the relationship between seconds, beats, metronome marks)

'A Crazy Composer' (Drama/History/Film Studies)

- The invention of film and the early history of cinema
- Different forms of non-verbal communication to express emotions/tell a story

'Vibe' (Science and technology, Music technology)

- The science of sound
- Introduction to the principles and language of coding
- The relationship between music and technology

'Voices' (Modern Languages/Geography)

- The different languages of the world
- A celebration of multicultural societies

CONVOSATION STARTERS

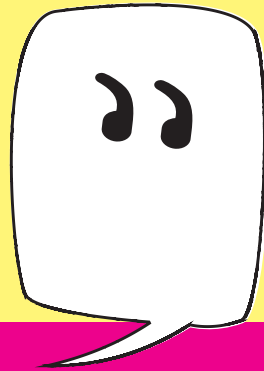


▶ #convo2019

JOIN THE CONVO-SATION!

'Convo-sation starters' are talking points relating to the themes of each movement of *Convo*. Please select any of the convo-sation starters below to discuss in your school and tweet your thoughts to **#convo2019** or email **info@triboroughmusicshub.org**.

Your replies may make their way into the final piece!



EARTH CALLING

- ▶ Start a conversation in 3 words...
- ▶ Why is music a 'universal language'?
- ▶ What do birds say to each other?
- ▶ What's your favourite ringtone and why?

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT THIS DRUM?



Image 1: Talking drum

The pitch can be regulated to mimic human speech. It has two drumheads connected by leather tension cords, which allow the player to modulate the pitch of the drum by squeezing the cords between their arm and body.

- ▶ What does 'home' mean to you?
- ▶ What makes someone a 'Londoner'?



WHERE CAN THIS BE FOUND, AND WHAT DOES IT REPRESENT?



Image 2: RAH frieze

Royal Albert Hall frieze, depicting the advancement of the Arts and Sciences of all nations.

PEN TO PAPER



- ▶ What makes a song anthemic?

WHY IS THIS MUSIC PRINTED LIKE THIS?

Tenor, alto and bass parts are shown in table book form, enabling the songs to be performed around a table. This is from the Royal College of Music's extensive collections of manuscripts and early printed music.

Image 3: Robert Jones: *Ullinum Vale*: with a triplicity of musicker. London, 1605



PEN TO PAPER

DEVICES

- ▶ Finish the lyrics "Hear our voices sing out loud!...." ?
- ▶ What colour does a trumpet sound like?
- ▶ What music would you choose for the soundtrack of your life?
- ▶ Can you create and perform a piece of music using one line, three dots and the colour red?
- ▶ What message would you send to the future?

WHICH FOUR INSTRUMENTS COULD PLAY THE PARTS IN THIS GRAPHIC SCORE?

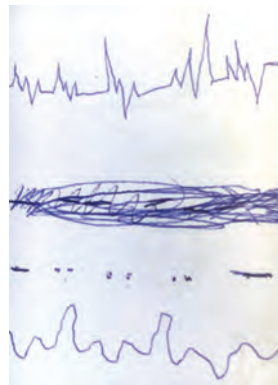


Image 5: Graphic score written by a pupil at a Convo workshop

WHO COULD HAVE WRITTEN THIS SCORE?

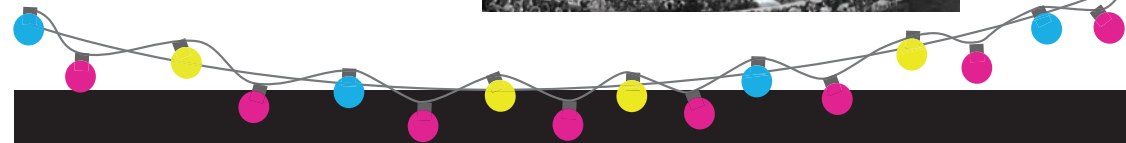


Image 4: Mozart: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra K491 (with original doodles)
Completed on 24 March 1786. This is from the Royal College of Music's extensive collections of manuscripts and early printed music.



Image 6: First demonstration of electricity at the Royal Albert Hall, June 1873.

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT THIS PHOTOGRAPH?!



- ▶ How could you musically represent electricity?
- ▶ What's your name in Morse Code?



<https://morsecode.scphillips.com/translator.html>

CAN YOU GUESS THE YEAR OF THESE FILM SHOWINGS AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL?

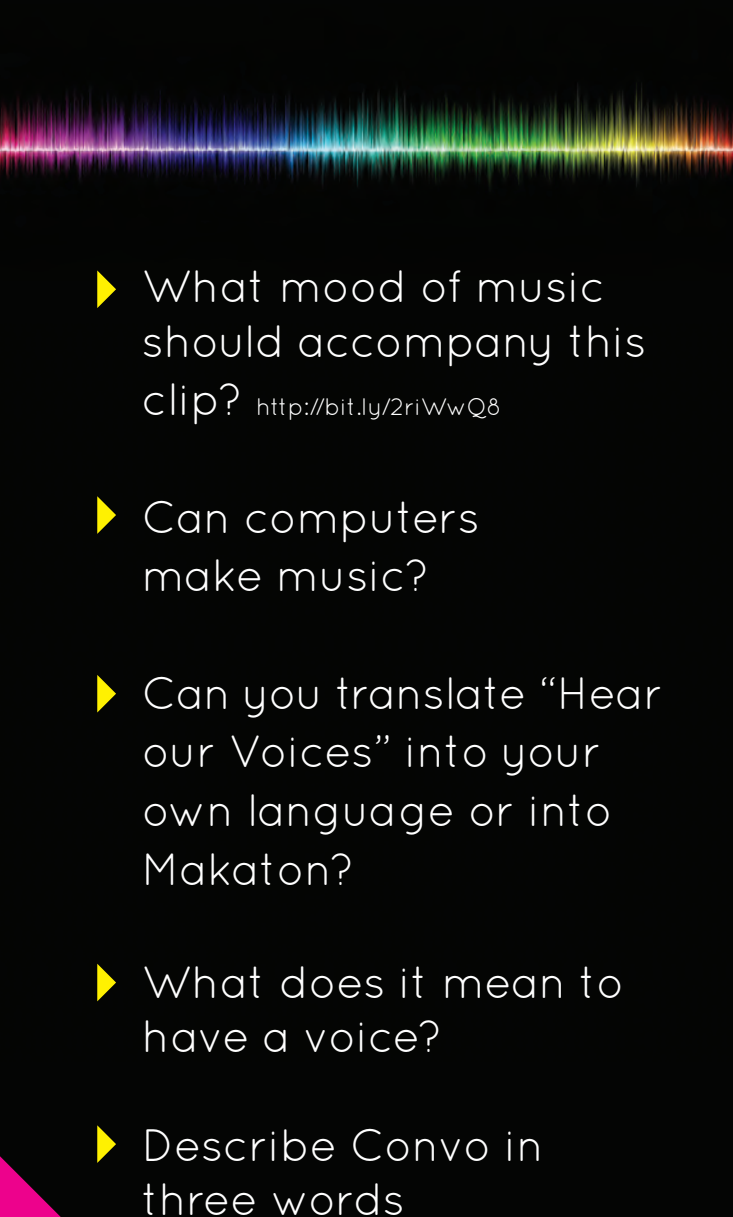
Royal Albert Hall film projection past and present.



Image 7a: Interstellar, 2015



Image 7b: The Niebelungs, 1924



- ▶ What mood of music should accompany this clip? <http://bit.ly/2riWwQ8>
- ▶ Can computers make music?
- ▶ Can you translate “Hear our Voices” into your own language or into Makaton?
- ▶ What does it mean to have a voice?
- ▶ Describe Convo in three words

WHERE DO WE HEAR STEREOPHONIC SOUND?



Image 8: Convo workshop

CAN COMPUTER CODE BE CREATIVE?

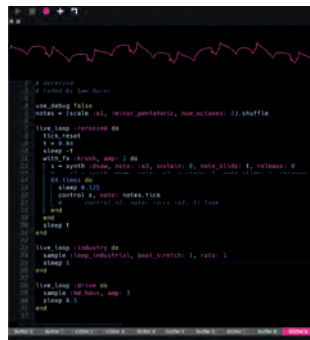


Image 9: Sonic Pi coding - Rerezzed by Sam Aaron



Image 1: Talking drum



Image 2: RAH mural



Image 4: Mozart: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra K491 (with original doodles!)

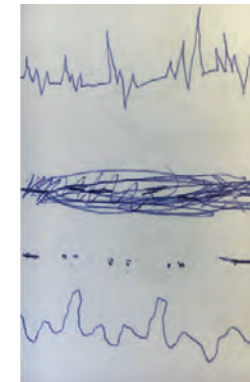


Image 5: Graphic score written by a pupil at a Convo workshop

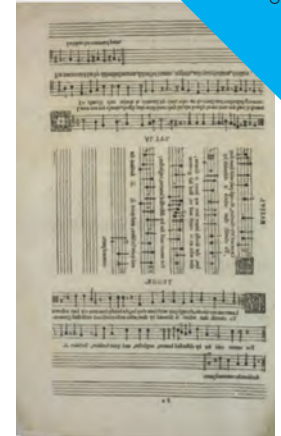


Image 3: Robert Jones: Ultimum Vale: With a triplicity of musicke. London, 1605

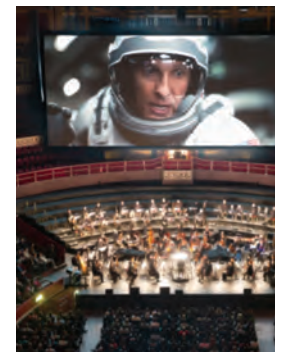


Image 7a: Interstellar, 2015



Image 7b: The Niebelungs, 1924



Image 6: First demonstration of electricity at the Royal Albert Hall, June 1873.



Image 8: Convo workshop

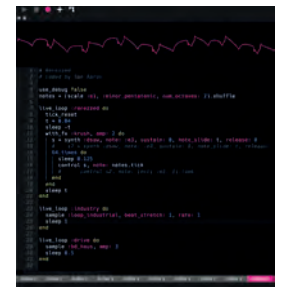


Image 9: Sonic Pi coding - Rerezzed by Sam Aaron

With thanks to ...

Royal Albert Hall Archives <https://www.royalalberthall.com/about-the-hall/our-history/>

Royal College of Music Libraries and Museum <http://www.rcm.ac.uk/museum/>

Sonic Pi <https://sonic-pi.net/>

Inspire Works www.inspireworks.co.uk

EDFSS <https://www.efdss.org/>