Resource Activity Ideas

PASS A SOUND

In a circle, one person starts with a sound and passes this around the circle.
Try with

- a percussive sound like a clap
- a longer vocal sound
- a physical movement

Use different tempo's and dynamics

1-8

For this piece the group can use voice, any instrument or sound making object. Each person in the group:

- finds a short sound on their instrument/sound maker/voice
- Choses a number between 1-8 for the short sound

One member of the group takes on the role of conductor by keeping time and counting the numbers (verbally and with a visual cue). The group are conducted in to play their short sound/number

Next, each person chooses:

- long sound on their instrument/sound maker/voice
- Choses a number between 1-8 for the long sound

The conductor can conduct:

- long and/or short sounds
- how many of the group are playing
- stopping/starting
- volume
- Tempo

What else?
Try different time signatures. 6 is a good next step, but what about other time signatures?

MY RHYTHMS

(an adaption of Rhythms (Oliveros, 1996) Oliveros, P., 2005. Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice. Lincoln, USA. iUniverse.)

Choose a sound for:

- your outward breath (this can be anything, a note, a texture, a silly sound, a raspberry, long or short…)
- a non-vocal sound for you inward breath
- a sound to use when blinking
- Another for heartbeat

Decide on a visual and audible signal for each - Out Breath; In Breath; Blinking; Heartbeat.

A volunteer conductor conducts which rhythms to the group plays using both visual and audible cues.

- Try to make sure you can hear the sounds of everybody else when playing your on sounds
- Try everyone playing the same Out Breath; In Breath; Blinking; Heartbeat
- Experiment with combining Out Breath; In Breath; Blinking; Heartbeat played by different people in the group

RHYTHM FROM WORDS

Using words as the basis for rhythms is a fun way to generate, loop and develop rhythmic ideas. This could use peoples names or be thematic like Fruit Salad or Train Rhythms below.

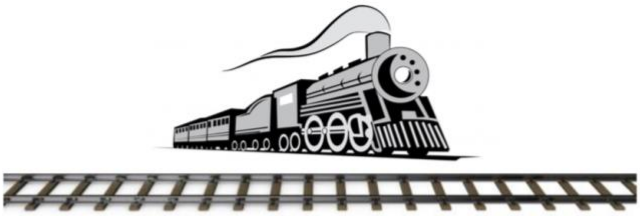
FRUIT SALAD

Fruit salad rhythms

What rhythm would these fruit have?

What rhythm would the ingredients for your favourite meal or cake make?

Train rhythms



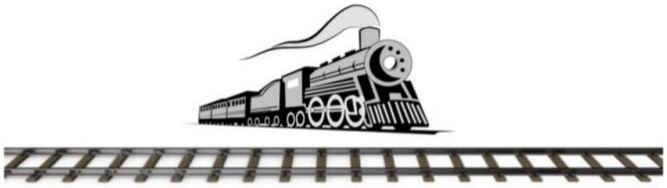
What rhythms do train station names make?

Try out different station stops on a journey

Portslade **Hove** **Brighton** **London Road**

How does the rhythm sound when you repeat it?

Some other train station rhythms to try



Shoreham-by-sea **Hove** **Brighton**

Pevensey and Westham

What rhythm would other train stations make?

SCRIBBLING

(John Stevens Search and Reflect)
Using a sound maker/ instrument in a similar way to scribbling on a page. A playful approach to sound making, letting go of the inner critic, not over thinking the making of sound

Try to make your scribbling sound as 'terrible as you can'. Did it sound terrible or was there interesting things about the sounds you made? Did the rest of the group find any of the sounds interesting?

When does Scribbling become doodling?

JOURNEYS

Making pieces based on journeys.
Example journeys: Journey to the centre of the earth, journey across continents, across seas, across landscapes or terrain, journeys in space, reaching new planets, microscopic journeys.

Sound Making Activities

QUESTIONS ON SOUNDS

- What is your favourite sound?
- What sound gives you the chills?
- 2 sounds (not music) that you remember hearing today
- 2 sounds (not music) you like
- 2 you do not like

SOUND MATTER

Gather a range of items, objects materials - whatever is to hand can be used - examples could include natural and man-made materials: wood, stone, metal, water, rocks, pebbles, packaging, natural materials, leaves, twigs thistles, …anything... (These materials could also be chosen to link in with themes for example local landscape, recycling and waste.)

- Choose matter – each person picks 2 objects/materials and finds three different sounds with them. Encourage contrast, (length, dynamic, sound quality/timbre) and explore different ways matter could be played - scraping, hitting, rustling, tearing, crumpling, squashing, scratching.

- 3 minutes picking objects and sharing ideas and examples of sound making if necessary.

- Go round circle just listening to everyone's sounds in turn. Go round a second time, but stop between each sound set to talk about: How might the sound be described? (Invite examples and words). Qualities, texture, loud/quiet…? Can you make the sound with your voice or any of your sound objects?

- Use the sounds in a 1-8 piece above

SOUND SCREEN

Materials needed: Screen, range of materials (see below), paper, and pencils.

- Set up a screen, curtain, large box, anything that provides a visual barrier.
- Collect a range of materials. Some suggestions could be paper, leaves, stones, plastic, metal, wood, water – use your imagination.
- Depending on size of the group, split up into sound swapper zones.
- Sounders - Play, improvise, experiment or pre prepare sounds using the various objects and materials behind the screen to make 3-6 contrasting sounds per sound zone. Try using different actions or gestures, to make a mixture of quiet and loud sounds with a variety of sound textures and intensities. Try hitting, scraping, blowing, rubbing, shaking, striking. Challenge each swapper zone sound, try to make it as difficult as possible to guess what the source of the sound is.

Each zone will take it in turns to be sounders and investigators.
Investigators of sound (everyone not playing in the current sounder zone)

- Use mark making on paper to express the qualities of the sound you have heard.
- Recreate the sound using your voice.
- Try to think of words that might describe the sound you have heard.
- Can you guess what the material was / how the sound was made? - try to encourage identification of the sound and some feature or way to describe it.

LISTENING MATTER

The sounds are listened to without information on the source of the recording. The source of the sound is revealed after listening to try to encourage an inquisitive listening process and individual response. Some sounds may be more ambiguous than others.

Listening incorporates a range of matter, (including naturally occurring, human intervention, as well as pieces). This could be mixed and matched to give attention to all sources and methods of sound in the listening process. Listening resources may be chosen in relation to other area of the curriculum.

- The sound is listened to first without any reference, disclosure or explanation.
- Paper and pencils are provided and the group are encouraged to use mark making to respond to what they are hearing.
- The sound is then discussed and the group are invited to share thoughts, talk about features, descriptions and qualities of what they have heard.
- The sound source us revealed, then the sound is played again.
- The group are welcome to respond and discuss after this second listen, or more detail on matter, methods or features may be talked about.

Example: Underwater themes
Discovery of Sound in the Sea - http://www.dosits.org/resources/students/
Snapping shrimp - http://www.dosits.org/resources/all/featuresounds/snappingshrimp/
Bottle nose dolphin - http://www.dosits.org/resources/all/featuresounds/bottlenosedolphin/

LOCATION SOUND SWAP

Location recording composition

Collections of field recordings from a variety of locations are used as the stimulus for making acoustic pieces. Some suggestions for types of recordings include dwellings, for example cities, towns, villages, rural dwellings; people; events, celebrations; natural environments such as woodland, jungles, mountains, sea, underwater; bioacoustics recordings of different species or combinations of species; industrial, for example factories, docks, machinery. These recordings could also link in with other elements of the curriculum.

Materials needed: audio playback facilities, a variety of sound objects and/or instruments and voice; short sections of field recordings (10-30 seconds) dependent on the group and the time available for this activity.

- Each small group listens to three contrasting recordings and chooses one.
- Each group makes an acoustic piece based on the recording they have chosen.
    - The piece could be approached as a direct time line of sound events of their chosen recording, representational, experiential, or as a more abstract response to the recording.
- The small groups perform their short pieces to the rest of the group.
- The rest of the group are invited to share their responses to the piece for example what the quality of sound is, is it sparse, dense? Loud, quiet? What do you think the original recording might have been?
- The whole group could then be played the original recording the piece started from.

SOUND BASED LISTENING PIECE EXAMPLES

The pieces are listened to without information on the source of the recording. The source of the sound is revealed after listening to try to encourage an inquisitive listening process and individual response. Some sounds may be more ambiguous than others. These pieces could be used as starting points for discussion and activities on source matter, features, materials, gesture, imaginary worlds.

- Empty Vessels – Denis Smalley, 1997, on Sources/scenes, 2000.
"The empty vessels of the title are some large garden pots from Crete and an olive jar from Turkey. Recordings of the air resonating in these vessels provided the starting-point for the piece. Since the recordings were done in my garden in north London, sounds from the environment (rain, birds, planes flying overhead) were also captured by the microphones inside the pots, and changes in the timbre of these sounds resulted from interaction with the filtering effect of the resonant vessels. These 'natural' transformations were extended through computer treatments of the sources, and they also suggested relations with very different types of resonant sounds. The garden palette was expanded with recordings made in the same environment without the benefit of the vessels' transformations." (Samlley, 1997)

- ConcretPH - Iannis Xenakis, 1958, on An Anthology of noise and Electronic Music, First a-chronology
"Xenakis pre-recorded crackling embers from which he extracted very brief (one second) sound elements. Then he assembled them in huge quantities, varying their density each time."

- Little Animals - Natasha Barrett, 1998, on Chillies and Shells, Nota Bene Records.
"A forest of small creatures gradually expose their expressive selves through the juxtaposition, transformation and mutual interaction with their surrounding environment. Slowly, sound fragments lose their acoustic source-bond to leave the bare essence of their expressive content, and gradually unfold an abstract musical discourse." (Barrett, 1998)

Beneath the Forest Floor – Hildegard Westerkamp, 1996. Transformations, empreintes DIGITALes.
"composed from sounds recorded in old-growth forests on British Columbia's westcoast. It moves us through the visible forest, into its' shadow world, its' spirit; into that which effects our body, heart and mind when we experience forest. Most of the sounds for this composition were recorded in one specific location, the Carmanah Valley on Vancouver Island. This old-growth rainforest contains some of the tallest known Sitka spruce in the world and cedar trees that are well over one thousand years old. Its' stillness is enormous, punctuated only occasionally by the sounds of small songbirds, ravens and jays, squirrels, flies and mosquitoes."

Soundtrack For Film/Animation

FOLEY

(named after Jack Foley, who in 1927, created the soundtrack of footsteps, props etc. for the film Showboat in one track.)

EXAMPLES OF FOLEY ARTISTS AND APPROACHES

Examples could be:
Star Wars (audio files and descriptions here - http://www.filmsound.org/starwars/)

- TIE Fighter is "a drastically altered elephant bellow"
- R2D2 – 50% electronic, 50% blended water pipes, whistles, vocalisations
- Chewbacca – walrus and other animal sounds
- Lightsaber – blend of TV set and old 35mm projector
- Luke's landspeeder – recording LA freeway through vacuum-cleaner pipe
- Clip of sound designers working on Episode 2 (2:00 min – 5:43 min) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fv1O0Xhh4zU&feature=related

Dragonfly in the opening scene of Men in Black.
"Columbia TriStar hired a bug wrangler in L.A. to supply an actual dragonfly -- but the director, Barry Sonnenfeld, said it didn't sound 'real enough,'" says Dustin DuPilka. "We ended up using a little toy fan that I found in Toys "R" Us. We wrapped the handle in cloth to muffle the motor, then snipped off the fins and replaced them with duct tape that we had molded in our hands to make more cloth-like.[1]"

Star Trek photon torpedo blast – recording of a slinky
(http://www.filmsound.org/articles/horrorsound/horrorsound.htm)

[1] Sounds Good! By W. Eric Martin http://1099.com/c/ar/di/foley_d030.html

Transformers – "The slowed-down squeal of a faulty car window became a deep robo-growl, the gargling of a bent garden hose with its pitch altered became bleeping data-chatter, and a car door slamming became booming Transformer footsteps.

Transformers: Dark of the Moon, an elephant's trumpet, slowed down to 20 per cent of its original speed, becomes the sound of an alien mothership."
http://designingsound.org/2011/07/wired-designing-sounds-for-transformers-dark-of-the-moon/

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2. Director David Yates – a film is 85% sound. Documentary (1:40 – 3:25 http://designingsound.org/2011/07/the-sound-of-harry-potter-and-the-deathly-hallows-part-2/) -Lots of big smashing in this! (be aware of group before playing this and state this is not a licence to go round smashing things up. Try some things on small scale, eq., pitch, layer, combine)

Some examples on source and processing techniques (including spaceship from a cat purr, avalanche from feeding the cats) - http://www.emusician.com/techniques/0768/outer-limits/134566

HAVE A PLAY WITH SOME "TIME TESTED TRICKS"

Examples (from The Art of Foley by Phil Rodrigues - http://www.marblehead.net/foley/specifics.html):

Corn Starch in a leather pouch makes the sound of snow crunch.
A pair of gloves sounds like bird wing flaps
thin stick makes a great whoosh!
1/4" audio tape when balled up sounds like grass (we walk on it!) or flowers
A wet balloon makes a weird sound when rubbed: this is funny more than practical!
'Flubber' (they sell it in toy stores) is great for wet squishy sounds; so is gelatin and liquid hand soap.
Frozen romaine lettuce (I used this in the 'War Of The Worlds' television series for alien head squishes!) makes a great bone or head squishy noise
Cellophane can make the sound of crackling fire
A heavy rolled and taped up telephone book makes a good 'body punching' surface.

MAKE YOUR OWN SOUNDTRACK

Materials needed:

- Short film clips;
- paper and pencils;
- range of objects, matter, material (Anything! – have a selection. Kitchen utensils, pots, pans, packaging, metal, wood, water, stones, gravel, sandpaper, junk, recycling, etc…);
- Microphones and Computer with audio editing software capable of synchronising with video playback; instruments.
- Sound effects and sample libraries could be used, but making unique sounds during the session or creatively combining them is to be encouraged.
- A range of short moving image, film, animation clips to be chosen from. These can be age and group specific (animation and sci-fi is fun), but have a good mixture of characters, scenes, moods and more abstract.

Have a sound maker and a listener. Listener - what the sound could be imagined as? This is about imagining what the weirdest, wildest, silliest imaginary source of the sound.

Split into small groups

Watch the clip and talk about what is happening and what kinds of sounds might be needed. Jot a few ideas down.

Think about: Mood

- What is visible? What is imagined?
- Foreground and background
- Location, environment, ambience
- Character sounds – action, movement, footsteps, rustling
- Voices of main characters and/or extras
- Additional sounds could include: Mechanical sounds, vehicles, animals
- Musical soundtrack

Watch the clip again and start thinking about how you might story board it (using descriptive words, instructions, pictures or mark making) against a timeline the different sounds that might be included (pause and rewind every few seconds if necessary).

Sounds could be used to emulate what is happening in the scene, or could be more experimental.

How might sounds be created with the materials available?

Try different ways of physical sound creation with objects (scraping, rustling, hitting, etc) or body.

Record improvised soundtrack and watch back. This could be done several times to try different things out.

The final soundtrack could be a recording of a live performance (with quonks - also known as unwanted sounds edited out if necessary) or sound making events or environments can be layered and synchronised on a computer.