

The Studio

Dance – Creative brief 2: Create music for trio choreography

In this brief, a trio of dancers from **Visual Poets** perform choreography from the piece *Stronghold*, first performed in Brighton in June 2018, and we invite young composers to create new music for this sequence.

You can watch the sequence via our video playlist on The Studio, as well as a guidance video and musical responses to the brief. Go to lpo.org.uk/thestudio and find this brief on the Dance page.

This extract was filmed at LPO Soundworks Spotlight Day in East Sussex Music, November 2018.

Choreography: Munya Muchati

Dancers: Munya Muchati, Machis Baboulene and Will Timpson

Breaking down the piece

This piece is in two main parts, each divided into 2 sections: Cause and Reaction

- Part 1: cause – this scene has smooth movements and a tense build-up. There appears to be one character set apart from the other two
- Part 2: reaction – this section has more energetic movements and the suggestion of more of a pulse. The trio performs in unison
- Part 3: cause – similar to part 1 but more in unison – do you want to reflect that musically?
- Part 4: reaction – similar to part 2 but finishing off the piece – do you want to build to a climax?

Think about whether you want to compose for the whole video, or just a section.

How to approach composing for this sequence

Before you start, think about:

- **Atmosphere and mood:** is it happy? Tense? Anguished? Celebratory? How might you want to reflect the mood in your music? Do you want the whole piece to have something similar running through it, or should the music change for the different sections?
- **Instrumentation:** think about what instruments or digital tools you have – what would be most appropriate for this? Do you want a thick, layered sound or something more minimal? Do you want a percussive element or more melodic, or both? There are three dancers – do you want to reflect this in how many instruments you choose?
- **Punctuation (hit points)** – are there any obvious movements you want to accentuate in your music?

- **Characters** – who’s here? How do they move? Is there a story? How can you depict this musically?

Traps, tips and things to try:

- Before you get complicated with your music, try a couple of simple ideas and play them along with the scene. What can you do with just a drone? Or a simple pulse or heartbeat rhythm? Can you play with volume or with music dropping in and out, with just these simple elements?
- Limit your musical material – consider using only a certain number of pitches, only certain rhythms, textures or registers. A limited palette of musical ideas can allow more freedom in experimenting in other areas
- It is rare for a dance sequence to match the music precisely, so don’t try and hit every beat and gesture in your music – aim for something that makes sense musically that relates to the dance thematically, with some hit points
- Play with music mimicking movement and then juxtaposing against it. Try having smooth music with smooth movement and rhythmic music with more rhythmic movement, then try swapping. Do you like matching music to the movements, or do you enjoy the contrast? Try a combination of matching and contrasting music in your piece to build layers of interest
- Try playing lots of different music alongside the clip – this could be you playing an instrument, or playing existing music. Does the music affect the mood or meaning of the scene? If you record yourself and play back what you’ve made, with the scene, which versions do you like best?



What next

Share your composition:

When you have created your composition, we would love to hear it and showcase it on The Studio. You can send an audio file to education@lpo.org.uk if you would like us to add it to our video playlist, so The Studio community can watch the sequence with your soundtrack.

Please send audio files by email or wetransfer, along with how you wish to be credited (your name, school/college if relevant, age, instrumental line-up or name of anyone performing on your track if not you, any comments on your process or other comments you think would be interesting to include). We can’t perform any written scores, so please just send audio.