

Unit 2: Composition appraisal

Q.1 What areas of study did you choose and what is the focus of your composition within the given strand?

Genre

My composition is a film piece. I choose to create a composition that would be used for a film because as a musician I feel like that is my strongest area as I am able to create atmosphere in my work but at the same time know where to build up the tension or lower it in my piece. Also by creating an atmospheric piece I was able to utilise broken chords, repeat the main melody with minor variations through out the whole piece and I was able to experiment with other instruments to add affect to the piece and create atmosphere.

I have chosen the following areas of study:

1. **Syncopation AS01** – I have chosen to focus on this area of study as I feel it brings the most impact to this piece. I have syncopated the drums with the main melody, the reason for me doing this is so that it builds tension and a snare drum. I thought of this idea when I was listening a piece called “Lonely Solider” by Miika Mettinen on YouTube.
2. **Use of a drone AOS2** – I have chosen to focus on this as I feel that it keeps the piece moving forward but at the same time gradually developing the piece to create more atmosphere. For example, at the start of the piece I have used bass drum to add depth to my piece.
3. **Instrumental techniques AOS4** – I have chosen to focus on this because as a musician I feel that by using these techniques I was able to create a lot of atmosphere and keep the piece moving onwards and upwards. I have used the techniques: Tremolando, this is shown in the third section of my piece. I have used that with a variation of my main melody. I have used tremolando in the strings as I feel this is where the technique has the most impact on the piece.

Q.2 Why did you choose these areas of study and the particular focus within the strand?

The first area of study links to my composition because my piece is a homophonic texture and it has a clear melody line for the majority of the song which runs on top of some chords. The other way of describing this is a melody

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line with an accompaniment. So by using the main melody with chords I was able to syncopate the percussion underpinning the song through out. As for example at the start of the composition I have a bass drum underpinning the piece and as I start to add in the chords on the piano I start to add in the snare drum creating more atmosphere and keeping the piece moving forwards. I had this idea from the song "Lonely Solider" by Miika Mettinen

The second area of study links to my composition because my main melody evolves through out the piece meaning, having a drone in the bass keeps a element of timing and creates atmosphere in sections that are changing and evolving. I have also used a drone to exaggerate certain notes in a bar. For example, this is shown in the third section of my piece where I have changed and varied the melody to create a more major and happy piece.

The third area of study links to my composition because it suits my piece and brings a element of eeriness and suspense to my piece which creates atmosphere which is what is wanted in a film piece. I have used the instrumental technique: tremolando which I have used in the third section of my piece in the strings. The strings are the best instrument for the technique as it has the most impact to the music which creates the most atmosphere.

Q.3 How did you go about composing your music and how was the final recording achieved?

I composed my piece in the following way; I wanted to create a film piece with the main melody starting on the clarinet. I then started talking to clarinet players to see what they would recommend for the main melody and what would have the most impact atmospherically. So I ended up creating the main melody, which was at the start of the composition. The main melody is very exciting and up beat, which is what I wanted my piece to sound like.

After I had created a melody that I was happy with and met the criteria I had set for it, I decided to make minor variations to the melody to create a different type of atmosphere and change the mode of the piece. For example, in the second section of my piece I use a small rhythm that I had liked when I was creating my melody and used it to create more of a darker tone and by doing that I was able to heavily implement the percussion that underpins the whole piece to really build up the tone and overall have a good atmosphere.

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After that section I had varied the melody again to change the tone and make the piece sound uplifting and happy. In this section I use the same melody twice but started the melody on the piano a beat later to change the tone. I then added in the bass of the piano to add chords and broken chords to assist the melody and once again create atmosphere. I also use symbols to exaggerate certain notes and keep the melody moving forward, I also do this with the snare drum by adding triplets to speed up the song and not make the piece sound boring. I had also got the idea to use wind chimes in my piece from Miika as he uses them to almost start a new section and change the tone of his piece and build up atmosphere, which is what I have tried to recreate.

After that section I use a little bit of call and response to add variety to the piece but at the same time using a melody that has been varied from the main melody at the start. At the end of this section I use the same rhythm that I had used but got all the instrument that I was using to play the rhythm which I think successfully finished the section which meant I was able to follow on the piece and create a new section successfully.

Q.4 What difficulties did you encounter during the task and how did you over come them?

When composing my piece, I had the following issues:

For a start originally I did not include the second section in my piece but later on I decided it was necessary to add it in order to make my piece sound varied enough and to make sure that it had enough different sections.

Also the original outro section that I had made was just the main melody with no solo, basically the same as the intro. To over come this problem, I had found a section of my piece that I had really liked and varied the end of that section to make a ending. The section that I have used is the third section as I feel it changes the mood of the piece and makes it sound major and happy, but at the end of the [piece I added a little riff that instead of ending and starting a new section I made the strings and piano play upwards to then have a big crash at the end which I feel ended the piece in a triumphant way.

In some part of the song, I felt that like the drums were not varied enough and they were a little bit too repetitive. To over come this problem in some sections I created a little one bar beat for the snare drum so that it would not sound boring and repetitive, and would keep the piece moving and that the listener would want to hear the whole piece

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Q.5 what makes your composition successful in relation to the areas of study and the focus chosen within the given strand.

My first area of study was **syncopation** and my piece fits that area of study because I have used syncopation throughout I as feel it brings the most impact to this piece. I have syncopated the drums with the main melody, the reason for me doing this is so that It builds tension with a snare drum. I thought of this idea when I was listening a piece called “Lonely Solider” by Miika Mettinen on YouTube.

Another reason that I feel that my area of study was successful is that the syncopation has created a lot of atmosphere and parts of the piece that are boring have been changed and keeps the piece going.

My second area of study chosen was **use of a drone** and my piece fits this area of study because with a film piece the most important part is to create atmosphere and the listener to be able to picture the scene in their head and the use of a drone helps that. The drone keeps a beat to the song regardless what the melody is doing, it also adds depth to the music. An example of this is in the opening of the piece. I have used a bass drum to help build up the piece and to keep the piece moving and to keep the listener engaged and wanting to listen to more.

My third area of study was instrumental techniques and my piece fits this area of study because my composition is a film piece and by adding in techniques it just added that extra bit of atmosphere that is needed in a film piece I have used tremolando on the strings and by me doing that I have achieved the correct amount of atmosphere needed for my piece to work well.

I have learnt that when using tremolando you don't want to use much and loudly, if you do doo that the piece can sound bad a poorly put together. As a musician I believe that the amount I have used assists the piece in the way I need it to.

Q.6 What is the relationship of your composition to its context?

The intention of my composition was to be a film piece that linked to world music and links to the strand. I feel that I have met the musical ‘fingerprints’ of this style because for a start it is in a 4/4-time signature which I believe is a very common. For example, the song “lonely solider” is in 4/4 which is the song that gave me the idea to create my composition.

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Also I have included a piano and snare drum in my composition. This is very common in film music and especially in the type of music I am creating. The piano gives quite a nice and calm element to the composition, but the snare drum is used to keep the piece moving and is used very heavily in some sections to keep the piece moving. A good example of the piano and snare drum being used is in the piece "Lonely Soldier" by Miika Mettinen. As he uses the piano to calm the tone of the piece but then heavily implements the snare drum to add atmosphere and affect.

Another thing that I have done which has linked my piece to the context is that I have added in instrumental techniques that add affect to the piece and to keep the piece moving.

Overall, I think that my composition uses lots of different techniques and ideas to link