

The ? Motorist (dir. W.R. Booth, 1906)

Lesson by Jasper Jacob, music teacher & examiner

Music,
Key Stage 3

Over two lessons (90 to 120 min) students find music to accompany a short silent film and design a sound effects track to synchronise with events in the drama.

In the first lesson, students identify moments in the film which could have sound effects and then consider music tracks that work for *The ? Motorist*.

After completing some homework tasks, the second lesson gets students to produce their own sound effect tracks, using either live instruments or a music production programme, which is then shared or performed for the class.

Lesson Objectives

- To appreciate the relationship of music and moving image.
- To explore some basic film music techniques.
- Use judgement to make choices informed by musical and dramatic requirements.

You will need...

Access to *The ? Motorist* via Sci-Fi in the Classroom page.
Access to a music production programme OR a range of instruments suitable for creating music effects.
Access to the internet, art materials for designing

Curriculum links

- Listening with increasing discrimination and awareness to inform their practice as musicians.
- Using technologies appropriately and appreciate and understand a wide range of musical contexts and styles.
- Playing and performing confidently in a range of solo and ensemble contexts using their voice, playing instruments musically, fluently and with accuracy and expression
- Listening with increasing discrimination to a wide range of music from great composers and musicians
- Developing a deepening understanding of the music that they perform and to which they listen, and its history

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Activities

TRAILER: What Happens When?

Get students to watch the film a couple of times and to identify each point when something happens that ought to have a comic/dramatic sound effect (SFX). Be sure to make a note of the times, for example -0:05 min: *Car hits policeman*.

There are at least ten SFX possibilities in this 2min film! Save this list for later. Following this, lead students into a discussion about early cinema and whether it is truly silent.

MAIN ATTRACTION: Short Ride in a Fast Machine

Play students any of the following tracks (or any fast piece that a student thinks is suitable using either CDs, mp3 or by streaming:

- Mozart, Turkish Rondo for piano
- Bizet, Gallop from Jeux d'Enfants for piano duet
- J. Strauss, Perpetuum Mobile for orchestra
- Adams, Short Ride in a Fast Machine

Ask students to combine the music with the film.

If you are using a computer to either stream or play your music, you can do this by simply playing music in one tab and showing the film in another. The music does not have to be synchronised at this point.

Ask students to comment on the suitability of the different kinds of music. They tend to focus on accidental moments of synchronicity, for example 'the music goes up when the car goes up', but need prompting to express opinions about the suitability of mood, tempo etc. Some will notice that the Bizet is too short and will need repeating.

END CREDITS: Scoring *The ? Motorist*

Once they have chosen their accompanying score, ask students to design a lobby card highlighting the film and music information centred around a drawing of a moment they choose from the film.

Possible homework tasks could include investigating: Georges Méliès, cinema pianists, cinema musicians, Tom and Jerry music and SFX, Silly Symphonies,

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Fantasia; or finding an answer to the question: Were silent movies really silent?



Extras

Other Ideas

This lesson could also be used for the other Early Sci-Fi silent films. Several contemporary bands and artists have produced soundtracks for silent films, such as Air (A Trip to the Moon), Giorgio Moroder (Metropolis), and these new scores could be evaluated on their effectiveness. The mostly silent 1971 film *Silent Running* has also been rescored by post-rock band 65daysofstatic. You could ask students to discuss the merits of putting contemporary music with older films.

Read

'Working with Hitch': Neil Brand on scoring *Blackmail*' by Neil Brand, Sight and Sound online, 25 April 2014.

The Motorist (1906), screenonline.org.uk. See screenonline for more info on R.W. Paul and W.R. Booth.

Watch

Aerial Submarine (W.R. Booth, 1910) screenonline.org.uk.

Scoring the Pleasure Garden, a video about creating the musical score for Hitchcock's *The Pleasure Garden* (1925). <http://explore.bfi.org.uk/50321c94d29f3>.