## PROJECT 2 – Composing and Arranging

Music is a creative art – the act of musical creation being the very essence of music making. Musicians need a constant source of new music to perform, audiences need a constant source of new music to hear. In the western world and beyond the responsibility for new music often lies at the feet of the composer. There are ever-increasing avenues for the practising composer in the modern music industry. Writing within the classical tradition for the concert hall is one such avenue but the commercial world is also a source of employment for many working composers. The record industry needs songs; TV and radio needs jingles, theme tunes and incidental music; the theatre needs supporting scores; film and TV drama requires title music and underscoring; computer games need music; and increasingly the internet requires the skills of the composer.

There are more than 50 professional orchestras in the UK alone and many more chamber ensembles. There are countless amateur orchestras, bands, chamber groups and choirs alongside endless rock, pop, funk, jazz and soul bands. All of these groups need new music – many will create their own but others will enlist the help of a practising composer. The world of the composer is, therefore, rich, diverse, challenging and hugely rewarding.

This project looks at composition in its broadest sense. All composers deal with the same fundamental building blocks regardless of style or genre – generating musical ideas, exploring and developing those ideas, formalising those ideas into complete pieces and presenting the finished product in an appropriate format whether that be a printed form or a recording. The project explores a range of techniques at each stage in the compositional process. Students are free to work within a range of styles, genres and instrumental resources (both acoustic and electronic). The focus is on experimentation and the practical exploration of compositional possibilities.

**Originating extra-musical ideas:** eg themes, texts, images, graphics; choosing resources and starting points appropriate to the desired effect or composition brief; Musical ideas: eg pitch sets, harmonic systems, motifs (rhythmic and melodic), chord progressions and patterns, tone rows, riffs, hooks and loops, sound palettes eg samples, synth sounds

**Extending and developing:** repetition (exact and loose); variation; decoration; sequence; contrasts and juxtapositions Manipulating musical material: eg transposition, transformations (inversion, retrograde, retrograde inversion), cut and paste techniques, additive and subtractive processes, diminution and augmentation (rhythmic and pitch), displacement

**Working with and manipulating layers:** process techniques eg phasing, canon, instrumentation, textures eg polyphonic/homophonic, contrapuntal textures, melody and accompaniment, contrasts and juxtapositions

**Forms and structures:** formal block structures eg binary, ternary, rondo, arch; developmental forms eg theme and variations, ground bass, sonata form; song structures eg 12 bar blues, verse-chorus constructions, riff based songs; effective use of repetition and self-reference; circular/repetitive structures eg those found in some minimalism or dance music