FANFARE

Young Composers Resource

(11 – 16)
COMPOSING YOUR FANFARE

This resource will take you through the different stages of composing your fanfare. From dreaming, to first ideas, to developing and organizing your ideas, through to evaluating and refining what you have done. It is not meant as a step-by-step guide (though it could be used as such) to the perfect fanfare, but more of a bank of ideas for when you get stuck or if would like to try something different. We want you to be as imaginative as possible. Try not to rely on what you already know or limit your ideas to what you can play on your instrument as this could limit your imagination.

As well as the written activities laid out in this resource, there are links to video interviews with living composers, existing fanfares, and suggestions of other music you can watch and listen to for inspiration. Many of the composing ideas, processes and tools come from the fanfares that we suggest you listen to. You can skip any section but it might help to have a look through all the different sections before you start. Likewise you might first want to listen to some composers talking about how they would approach the brief, or listen to some unusual fanfares.

THE BRIEF

We would like you to compose a 30 second fanfare. The winning 10 fanfares will be used instead of bells to signal the end of intervals at the Royal Opera House.

You can compose your music in whatever style you like, or no style at all. We ask you to submit your fanfare as an audio recording. Don’t worry about the quality of the audio recording as it is your ideas and imagination that matter. Even if it is you and your friends performing and it doesn’t sound perfect, don’t worry. The audio could be generated by the music software such as Sibelius, by you and your friends performing, or by another musician or group of musicians you might know such as your instrument or class music teacher.

Winning fanfares will eventually be orchestrated for full orchestra by composer Duncan Chapman. This doesn’t mean you have to think about composing for every instrument in the orchestra but you might want to think and imagine how it might ultimately sound for full orchestra. Your music might be in just one part/line with everyone playing the same idea, or two or three different parts: such ideas can be just as powerful as music that has many parts.

Listen to some of last year’s winning entries here

Find out more about the competition here

What makes a good fanfare?

A successful fanfare is one that grabs attention, has good pace, shows development of musical ideas, has a clear and coherent structure, uses the available instruments effectively and idiomatically, and fulfills your intentions as well as those of the brief.
GETTING STARTED

Dreaming

A fanfare is a short musical flourish that grabs the audience’s attention. How could you make your fanfare unique and stand out? What occasion is it for? This could range from solemn and ceremonial to celebratory and joyful, to the personal or even the absurd.

How will you grab people’s attention and hold it for 30 seconds? Will you creep up slowly like the emerging minimalist music of John Adam’s Tromba Lontana, or whisk the audience into an immediate frenzy like the start to his Short Ride in a Fast Machine or will it be the uniqueness of your music that makes people notice it, like Ligeti’s Vorspiel for car horns.

Composers have very different ways of working: where they work, the routines they have and what they do to generate their best ideas and feel most creative. Listen and watch these composers talking about where they do their dreaming, imagining and playing.

Kerry Andrews

Mathew Herbert

Where do you have your best ideas? Some people go for a walk, others like to be surrounded by their favourite objects or sitting on the bus or the train. Some composers work at the piano, others at the computer and some with pen and manuscript paper.

Some composers like to mess around, play and improvise using a musical instrument or software to help them create music. Others use games and rules to help them generate unexpected musical ideas.

Throughout theses activities remember this resource is just a guide and the best guide for your composing are your ears and your imagination. Do take risks and trick yourself into finding new ideas.

Remember:

- This resource is just a guide
- Every idea has potential
- Try and stick with your ideas even if they don’t seem perfect
- Generate lots of different possibilities not just one
- You don’t have to start at the beginning
- Listening to lots of different music can stimulate ideas
- Small ideas can develop into entire pieces
- Fewer ideas can sometimes result in a better and more coherent piece
- Try different ways of working and take yourself down unexpected paths
- Work with your friends to try out ideas
- Allow for surprises
- Rules can be/are designed to be broken

Most of all use your ears and your imagination
**WARM UP PROJECT**

This activity is designed to make you think about how different musical elements can be used to create the expression, atmosphere or effect that you would like in your fanfare. By only using one musical pitch to compose your fanfare this simplifies the task and allows you to concentrate purely on the other elements. Ideas explored in this warm up will be referred to throughout the resource.

**Fanfare on One Note:**

Some composers like to set themselves limits and rules to narrow down multiple possibilities or discover new ideas. The ultimate rule could be to only use one note for your entire fanfare. (One note could mean everyone playing the same note all the way through, everyone playing their own but different one note all the way through, or, the composite sound made by unpitched and untuned percussion instruments). As you compose, remember to imagine what an entire orchestra playing one note might sound like.

How could you make a fanfare with just one note grab, and keep people’s attention? Do you want it to grab people’s attention immediately, build up slowly, or for it to be intense for the whole 30 seconds?

If you only have one note to use, expression can’t come from the shape of the melody. Instead in this activity we will ask you to think about:

- **Durations**: how long or short the notes or rests (silences) are
- **Dynamics**: how loud or soft your notes are
- **Colour**: how the instruments are being played (timbre, articulations, instrumental and extended techniques....)

**Durations:**

Start with durations using long and short notes and rests. Improvise on one note using long and short notes, thinking about the drama of your fanfare. If you wanted to you could use a coin, with heads for a long note and tails for a short note, or use a word in Morse Code. You could draw you ideas using dots for short notes and lines for long notes, and leave different amounts of space in between for rests, or you could use traditional notation. Don’t get too bogged down with notating your fanfare exactly. Try playing your ideas with different overall speeds. What happens if you make all the short notes very short?

Below are some examples. What do you notice about them?

a) [Listen here]

```
--- ... ...
```

b) [Listen here]

```
-- ... ...--
```
c) [Listen here]

Hopefully you spotted the use of, silence, repetition of ideas, variation of ideas, pattern and structure.

So... a good idea might be to not just have a stream of long and short notes but to create patterns that repeat or develop. Also think carefully about using silence(s) dramatically.

WHAT NEXT?

Find out how to add colour to your one note fanfare
Look at ideas on how you might organize your musical ideas
Try a different starting point for generating ideas for your fanfare
COLOUR

Introduction:

To add colour, or ‘light and shade’ to your fanfare you might want to consider which instrument or group of instruments you would like to play which parts of your fanfare. The quality of the sound is called timbre. You could also add dynamics, articulations or extended techniques. Dynamics refers to how loud or quiet a sound is. Articulation refers to the way that sounds are played. They generally apply to all instruments but are achieved in different ways. Extended techniques are particular to individual instruments or groups of instruments.

Timbre:

Timbre is the tone quality of an instrument. It’s what makes one instrument of group of instruments sound different from each other. The fanfare you are composing is for a full orchestra that is made up from string, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments, in groups called sections. In your fanfare you don’t necessarily need to use the full orchestra all of the time though that sound can be electrifying. Different instruments are good at doing different jobs and play different roles. For example strings are wonderful at creating long shimmering sounds, percussion instruments are brilliant at punctuating and creating drama, brass can cut through the whole orchestral and woodwind play very fast. For excellent information about all the orchestral instruments look at this resource the Philharmonia Orchestra created. This will also tell you which range of notes the individual instruments can play. Balance is important too. It’s no good having low flutes playing at the same time as very loud trumpets!

Dynamics:

As you were playing with your long and short notes you might have found yourself naturally playing with dynamics (how loud or quiet). Did some of the long notes crescendo (get louder)? Were some of the short notes loud and accented? Maybe the fanfare became louder and louder as the fanfare progressed. Here are some examples notated in two different ways:

Example 1 [listen to a cello demonstrating this here]

Example 2
Articulations:

Musicians can play individual or groups of notes in different ways to change the character of the notes. This may involve them hitting, strumming, tonguing or bowing their instruments in different ways. Here are some common words used to tell musicians how to articulate the music.

Staccato short

Legato slurred/smooth

Sforzando sudden, strong emphasis

Tenuto full length

Accent emphasis

Instrumental and extended techniques:

Each instrument has a range of ways of being played that change the colour of the sound of the instrument. The more unusual ones are called extended techniques that often involve musicians being asked to play their instrument in more unconventional ways such as sing or hum as well as play. Below is a list of some of these.

**Brass:** different mutes, flutter-tonguing, half valve, multiphonics, pitch bending, glissando (mainly trombone), closed notes (french horn only), trills, mouth piece tap

  - Trumpet mute - listen [here](#)
  - Tpt flutter tounge - listen [here](#)
  - Triple tounging - listen [here](#)

**Woodwind:** multiphonics (listen [here](#)), pitch bending, trills (listen [here](#))

**Strings:** harmonics (listen [here](#)), muted , col legno, sutasto, pizzicato, slap pizzicato (listen [here](#))

**Harp:** tapping, thunder, pedal slides, glissandos

**Percussion:** Unusual beaters, bowing metal instruments, dropping balls or conkers onto instrument
**Performance directions:**

Sometimes using ‘non-musical’ descriptive words can be a very effective way of changing the colour and feel of your music.

Majestic   Joyful   Spikey   Rippling   Crazy   Smooth   Bouncing   Pointed   Excitable   Calm

Click [here](#) for ideas on how you might organize your musical ideas.

This fanfare could be the one you choose to submit. Remember complexity doesn’t necessarily make a fanfare better.

**Reflection Questions**

When you have finished your fanfare ask yourself:

- Does the fanfare have good overall timing and pacing?
- Are the moments of transition and change where I would like them to be?
- Does the fanfare have a clear direction or does it sometimes loose its way?
- Is the overall structure coherent and satisfying?
- Are there any ways I can enhance the overall character of the fanfare? How can you make it more X?
- Are my ideas clear? Does it do what I wanted it to do?
- Have you chosen the right instruments for the right roles/parts?

Remind your self [what makes a good fanfare](#).
GENERATING MUSICAL IDEAS

This page is designed to help you generate some initial musical ideas. There are activities for generating melodies, sets and sequences of pitches, for generating rhythmic and gestural ideas. It’s up to you to decide which you would like to start with.

When you start to compose, sometimes a blank page or imagining the infinite sonic possibilities can be intimidating and daunting. Maybe you can’t think where to start or maybe you have too many ideas.

Remember that there is nearly always potential in an idea however small. It is easy to discard ideas too early because they are not perfect. Try to stick with an idea and see where it takes you. You might be surprised.

Secondly, your first ideas might not be what end up being the beginning of your piece. Most composers don’t start at the beginning and continue until they finish. Often it can be a process of assembling and collaging ideas, of cutting things up and rearranging. This can be done using software, through using more traditional notation or through improvisation.

Some composers might have a clear idea of the overall shape and structure of piece at the start and then fill in the detail. Other composers might start with a tiny seed of an idea and see where it takes them.

Generating multiple possibilities is often a good idea, for example, ideas that contrast completely, ideas that change subtly and ideas that complement.

If you already have a clear initial idea from your dreaming and playing around, but you are not sure how to develop it, click here.

For ideas for suggestions of how to structure your musical ideas click here. For ideas for suggestions of how to organize your musical ideas click here.
Melody

Introduction:

The melodies of traditional fanfares often use simple triads or move up and down the harmonic series (the notes you get on an open string or through a brass instrument using no valves). The ideas below suggest a range of approaches from using modes to the harmonic series through to 12 tone melodies. Don’t worry about key signatures unless we say so!

Thinking preparation:

Before you start you might think about what kind of character you would like your melody and overall fanfare to have. You could think about this in an abstract way with….

…the melody as a curved line:

With dynamics . . .

Or broken up . . .
OR think about what direction the melody might have:

- Upwards (f1)
- Downwards (2)
- Undulating up and down (3)
- Extreme contrast of pitch (4)
- On a plateau

OR, more poetically, will it go from:

- cold to warm
- dark to light
- majestic to frenetic
- distant to close

OR will you hide a narrative in the melody? For example, a personal story of overcoming a struggle, a familiar journey that the student takes, an imagined or dream scenario.

**Generating Melodies**

Below are six starting points for generating melodic ideas:

1. Improvising
2. Limiting your pitches
3. Steal a melody

1. **Improvise or mess around**

Sometimes just improvising and messing around on your instrument or with your voice can generate a musical idea that you like. This might be a set of notes, a sequence of notes or a fully formed melodic idea with rhythm, dynamics and other expressive elements. Sometimes it helps to focus your improvisation by creating a few rules or parameters.

a) Record yourself improvising six completely contrasting musical ideas for 10 seconds each. Try to make each one contain none of the musical material of the other and try not to make any judgments about which ones are any good or not. Come back to these later, listen to the recording and choose elements or whole sections of your improvisations. The idea is to go outside your comfort zone and force yourself to find something new.

b) If you already have some rhythmic ideas, experiment playing them with different pitches, starting with two, then three, then four etc. Keep recordings or notes of your different ideas.

Many composers work this way and it can be very effective, but remember if you work this way, you might be limiting yourself by only composing something that only you could play, that only works nicely for your
instruments only or that is very similar to previous ideas. You can come back and use these techniques throughout composing your fanfare.

2. Making modal melodies/limited pitches

A mode is simply a type of scale with a particular sequence of intervals that gives it its melodic character. The most common modes are major, minor and pentatonic scales. In this activity you will create your own mode to create the initial melody for your fanfare.

Restricting the number of pitches can be helpful if you have only just begun to play a musical instrument as you can choose just the notes that you play well. It is also a technique that many composers use to close down limitless possibilities and also to create a particular sound world or character.

a) Pick between 3-6 notes your to make your own mode. A five-note mode is a good number but using just 3 will be fine too. Experiment including different accidentals (sharps and flats/white notes black notes).

b) Play it as a scale up and down – experiment with starting on different notes of the scale. Try to avoid them sounding too much as though they are in a major or minor key. What kind of quality, colour, emotion, character does your mode have?

c) Create some short melodic ideas/shapes from your notes. If you want to you can notate your ideas but it isn’t necessary. If you do, don’t worry about notating them exactly. Making audio recordings would be another way to keep track of your musical ideas.

Using the mode you have created, try out ideas from 1.a.

Listen to John Adams Tromba Lontana. This piece has a modal melody where new notes of the mode get added gradually as the music progresses. The composer evolves his melody in two ways: firstly by gradually adding new notes of the mode to the melody and secondly, by adding onto and extending simple musical ‘cells’. This are called additive melodies. Try creating a small musical cell with your mode and then on each repetition of the cell add a bit more onto the end of it, maybe also adding new notes of your mode.

Also listen to the first movement of Stravinsky’s Three Pieces for String Quartet. The melody here uses just four notes. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUepDjGgUnc

3. Turandot - Steal somebody else’s melody!

Composers often borrow snippets of music from each other to create their own versions or to use in completely new ways. Below is Princess Turandot’s leitmotif (character melody) from the opera Turandot, a Chinese pentatonic folk melody called Jasmine Flower. You can listen to it here as well. The story goes that Baron Fassini Camossi, the former Italian diplomat to China, gave the composer Puccini a music box as a gift which played a number of Chinese melodies including the Jasmine Flower folk song. Puccini ‘stole’ it to recycle in his opera – could you recycle it once again to make your fanfare?

a) Take a look at or listen to the melody, or have a go at playing it yourself.

• What part would you steal as a starting point for your fanfare?
• Are you going to use it in its original form with the same rhythm etc. or strip it down to its bare notes and add your own new rhythms?

b) Play around with the opening phrase – change the rhythm, change the character – make it spikey, make it solemn, make it dramatic, play it with a dotted rhythm. Think of a character and perform it like that person.

c) Play it as if you are creeping into a room, play it as if you are falling down the stairs, play it as if you are the most important person in the world. Use some of the ideas from the One Note Fanfare

4. **Elektra- Steal a leitmotif!**

A leitmotif is a short, recurring musical phrase associated with a particular person, place, or idea. It can appear in different forms throughout a piece of music to show a character’s different moods, their relationship to other characters, or to let the audience know something is about to happen. They can be often found in opera but the most famous example in classical music is probably the *Idea Fixe* in Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*. It is a device used all the time in film music, for example, the shark theme in *Jaws* and Darth Vadar’s theme in *Star Wars*, both by composer John Williams.

Take a look at/listen to/play Agamemnon’s Leitmotif from the opera *Elektra*. Listen [here](#)

• Think of a character and play the motif with that character’s way of moving or mannerisms
• Play it as if they are creeping into a room
• Play it as if they are falling down the stairs (listen [here](#) for an example)
• Play it as if they are the most important person in the world
• Play it as if they are very stressed and angry
• As if it is a ship in a storm

You could add notes, break it up or repeat parts of it.

Or you could play it:
5. Britten - Harmonic series

Many traditional fanfares are composed using the notes of the harmonic series. This is because many of them are written for trumpets and other brass instruments as they were loud instruments that could carry over long distances. Every tube produces a harmonic series with exactly the same spacing of intervals which get closer together as you get higher in pitch. Here is a basic harmonic series:

The Last Post for a solo bugle player is the most famous fanfare using this series and you will hear it on Remembrance Sunday. Listen to it here. Aaron Copland’s Fanfare for the Common Man also uses it, as does Benjamin Britten’s Fanfare for St Edmundsbury. In fact Fanfare for St Edmundsbury uses three trumpets playing three different harmonic series simultaneously.

Listen to the three different harmonic series:

1. Harmonic Series in C [listen here]
2. Harmonic Series in D [listen here]
3. Harmonic Series in F [listen here]

Choose one of the harmonic series Britten uses and create three completely contrasting melodies. You don’t need to use all the notes of the harmonic series.

6. Stravinsky - Twelve tone row - serialism

Stravinsky is best known for The Rite of Spring. Not so well known are the pieces he composed using the 12-tone technique otherwise known as serialism (most associated with the composers Schoenberg, Berg and Webern). Fanfare for a New Theatre for two trumpets is one of these. Twelve-tone technique emerged at the beginning of the 20th Century when conventional tonality based on keys was breaking down and uses every note of the chromatic scale once. 12-tone technique was a new way of creating, ordering and organizing melodies.

In twelve tone music a melodic note row is created using every note of the chromatic scale once. This row can appear backwards (retrograde), upside down (inversion) or backwards and upside down (retrograde inversion). In strict 12 tone music this is the only melodic material allowed and everything is created from it.

This is the row Stravinsky uses:

```
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  11  12
```

Now look at Stravinsky’s first tone row that is played by both trumpets and how the octave placement of the notes is different in each part. You will also notice that the rhythm of each part is completely different.

Trumpet 1: Listen [here]

Creating a tone row:

Write down the 12 notes of the chromatic scale on separate pieces of paper, shuffle them and then deal them out them out in a line. Play the row you have created. Now refine it using your ears and thinking about your initial ideas until you are satisfied. You can use the pitches in any octave you choose. The only rule is that you must use all the notes in your row.

Here is an example row called the prime. Listen [here]

Now write it out backwards to create the retrograde (backwards). E.g.

Now create the inversion (upside down). To do this start on the same note as the original then count the number of intervals (in semitones) to the next note. If it is two semitones up in the original count two semitones down to get your second note. E.g.

Now create the retrograde inversion (backwards upside down). To do this create a backwards version of your inversion. E.g.
7. Chroma and The Raven Girl - Ballet gesture or movement

The Royal Opera House is also the home of the Royal Ballet. Often it is the music that comes first with choreography coming later. However sometimes this can be the other way round with movement inspiring music. The Second Movement of *Three Pieces for String Quartet* by Stravinsky is a portrait of the clown Little Tich who Stravinsky encountered at a London music hall. Stravinsky said:

‘The jerky movement, the ups and downs, the rhythm – even the mood or joke of the music - was suggested by the art of this great clown.’ Igor Stravinsky

The Second Movement provides a useful example of how a limited number of musical gestures and their simple developments can be structured to create an effective short piece. Variation is less important in this project than having very distinct and characterful initial gestures which can then be organized through sequencing and layering. Listen to the 2nd movement of *Three Pieces for String Quartet*. How do you imagine the clown moving? (Little Tich [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpoGy_W1cCY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpoGy_W1cCY))

There are five distinct musical gestures. See if you can identify each one:

1. Long note to short note slide down which repeats four times
2. High pizzicato and bowed rhythmic cell
3. Rising and falling lyrical short melody
4. Loud dramatic stabs with grace notes
5. Frantic fast movement descending and on alternating notes

Notice how each of Stravinsky’s musical gestures are distinct in character from each other and use different string techniques. Here are some visualisations of the different gestures:
Inspiration – getting started:

Watch these short videos from Royal Ballet productions of *The Raven Girl* and *Chroma* without sound. Notice the different gestures the dancers make. Notice:

- the direction of travel – up, down, along, spinning – getting closer, moving away
- the speed of travel
- the quality of the movement – sharp, smooth
- whether a gesture is made up of other smaller gestures
- repetitions of the movement
- the sequence of movements

*The Raven Girl* 8:16 – 10:10 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn_XQF2ro78](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn_XQF2ro78)

*Chroma* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SMmL6kixw&list=PLFEuShFvJZBwedP2Rwg9RsORcVhWxmnNbs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SMmL6kixw&list=PLFEuShFvJZBwedP2Rwg9RsORcVhWxmnNbs) (first 40 seconds)

Now think how you might represent 3 or 4 of these gestures as simple musical ideas. Think carefully about the qualities of each movement/gesture and create distinct musical ideas which are as characterful as possible. Try to pick ideas that are contrasting.

Make audio recordings of your ideas or create some visual symbols like those above to help you remember your ideas.

**WHAT NEXT?**

Click [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn_XQF2ro78) to think about rhythmic ideas for your emerging melodies
Click [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SMmL6kixw&list=PLFEuShFvJZBwedP2Rwg9RsORcVhWxmnNbs) to think about adding colour (dynamics, timbre etc.)
Click [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn_XQF2ro78) to think about developing your ideas
Click [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn_XQF2ro78) to think about accompaniments
Click [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn_XQF2ro78) to think about structuring your ideas
Click [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn_XQF2ro78) to reflect on your fanfare so far
**Rhythm**

**Introduction:**

Rhythm and tempo will be big factors in determining the character of your fanfare. This section suggests two approaches to generating rhythmic ideas: one uses games and abstract ideas and the other uses extra-musical idea such as narrative, an emotion and character. Try different ideas out and remember these aren’t fixed rules rather ways to generate ideas you might not think of through only improvising or playing with/using notation.

If you started by creating melodies, listen to your ideas. Remember that these are just fragments and not your finished piece. Persevere, even if you’re not sure about what you have created so far. It is easy to discard ideas before they have had a chance to grow. Professional composers see potential everywhere and even the most unlikely sounding starting points can produce fantastic results.

Maybe as you listened to or performed your melodic ideas the rhythm became clear as you played around with it. If this is the case:

- Click [here](#) to think about adding colour (timbre, articulation, dynamics)
- Click [here](#) to think about creating variations
- Click [here](#) to think about accompaniments

If you are still not sure, you would like to stop yourself doing what you’ve always done before or just want to try something new try some of the ideas below.

- Remember at all times use your ears and imagination
- Check your ideas against the original idea for the fanfare you had: does it fit or might it change it?
- Remember just playing your ideas at a different speed can change their character completely.
- Don’t worry about bar lines or time signatures – use the notation that works – you are submitting audio not a score

Many composers including Liszt and Shostakovich have been fascinated by codes and used them in their music. Some of the ideas suggested below are like codes – you could use them to embed a secret in your music.

- Remember that these ideas are just starting points and you can break the rules whenever you like!
- Don’t forget that silence can be as expressive as sound
- If you find that the rhythmic pattern you have created is longer or shorter than the melodic one just start the pattern again or just use part of it.

The following ideas can be used to create rhythms for your melodies or can be used to create rhythmic ostinatos that you could use as accompaniments.

**Generating Rhythms**

1. **Improvise on your instrument**

Play your melody(ies) or tone rows over and over or listen to them using Sibelius. Experiment with different ways of rhythmizing them. Don’t forget to audio record or jot down your ideas for later use.

   a) Create versions that are:

   Majestic  Joyful  Spikey  Rippling  Crazy  Smooth  Bouncing  Pointed  Excitable  Calm
b) Think of a character. How does the person move? What kind of situation are they in? Is there a story? Now try rhythmasizing your melody or tone row thinking of your character.

c) Using a simple melodic contour and then create lots of different rhythmic versions:

2. Toss a coin

Find a coin and decide whether heads is a long note or a short note and the same for tails. Toss the coin the same number of times as the number of notes in your melody. You could use a dot to indicate a short note and a line for a long note. You can decide how long the long note is and how short the short note is. It is a good idea to experiment with this. Very very short notes that sound like grace notes can be very effective.

Look at this example below to help you. Listen here.

h = heads
t = tails

You may want to also add rests into your melody and try the melody out at different speeds.

3. Throw a dice

Composers from Mozart to John Cage have used games to create musical ideas. Roll a dice. Each number of a dice equals corresponds to the duration of a note or rest.

1 = two quavers, 2 = 4 semiquavers, 3 = crotchet, 4 = crotchet rest, 5 = minim, 6 = semi-breve

Throw the dice a number of times and write down the rhythmic pattern you produce. Using your melody you can decide whether to:

a) have one note of the melody per roll of the dice. Listen here
b) have strictly one note of the melody per duration. Listen here.

Listen to and/or play your melodies at different speeds and notice how the character changes.

4. Morse Code

Many composers including Liszt and Shostakovich have used codes in their music. Using your name or a secret code word translate your name into Morse Code. Morse Code uses combinations of dots and dashes to represent letters. You can decide whether to:

(a) have one note of your melody per letter

F A N F A R E (1 note per letter)

(b) have strictly one note of your melody per dot or dash

F A N F A R E (1 note per dot / dash)

You can decide how long or short the dots and dashes are and could add rests at the end of words.

5. Character

Look at the programme of operas coming up at the Royal Opera House. Look up their stories and characters. Pick a character that interests you. Here are some suggestions:

Elektra – full of anger, passion and revenge
Prince Calaf – the suitor who must solve three riddles or die
Turandot – the ice princess whose heart melts
Don Quixote – a bumbling knight

How would a fanfare for this character sound? Imagine how they would move and how they would be feeling in a particular scene. Using the melody you have created, try adding rhythm to give it the character of your choice.
WHAT NEXT?

Click here to think about melodic ideas for your rhythms
Click here to think about adding colour (dynamics, timbre etc.)
Click here to think about developing your ideas
Click here to think about accompaniments
Click here to think about structuring your ideas
Click here to reflect on your fanfare so far
DEVELOPING YOUR IDEAS FURTHER

When composing you have three simple options as to what to do next: you can repeat your idea, vary your idea or do something new.

Click here to go back to generating ideas to create some contrasting material.

Sometimes once you have generated some initial ideas these will be enough to get you going. Many people frequently don’t realize how few ideas whole pieces are built upon, even symphonies. Listen to the opening of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 and notice how many times the original idea is repeated in different ways. How many can you spot?

The melody you have created might be already 30 seconds long. You might feel that the melody alone makes a brilliant fanfare. However you might want to create an accompaniment.

Click here to think about accompaniments.

Sometimes just playing and improvising with your idea will help you discover variations of it or help you decide what next or maybe the narrative or other extra-musical idea you have will help you decide what comes next. However, if you’re stuck or would like to try something new this section is for you.

Some music does not evolve from creating variations of musical material but instead from cutting it up and rearranging, or layering it in interesting ways.

Variations
Developing ideas horizontally

A variation is a musical idea that is repeated but altered in some way, for example the pitch, rhythm, timbre, dynamics etc. Playing with and creating variations of your original material is at the heart of much classical composing. Using variations in your fanfare can help give your music coherence and give it a satisfying structure. Keep all your ideas, as they might be useful later as ostinatos and other accompaniments.

Melody:
- Transpose – the same melodic contour and intervals but starting on a different note
- Stretch the pitch contour – the intervals between notes become wider
- Squash the pitch contour – the intervals between notes closer together
- Keep the rhythm, change the pitches
- **Retrograde** – the same pitches but backwards
- Insert new notes or melodic ideas/cells
- Extract smaller melodic cells from the melody to develop into new ideas
- Additive ideas – add a new note/part to the end of the musical idea
- Take away notes from the melody
- Add spaces in the melody

Rhythm:
- Keep the same pitches, change the rhythm
- Shift the rhythm along
- Augment (make longer) and dimunite (make smaller) the durations
- Change the speed of all or parts of you melody
- Reverse the rhythmic pattern
- Invert the rhythms – long becomes short, short becomes long
- Extract smaller rhythmic cells and add new pitches
Colour:
- Change the instrument the is playing the idea
- Changing the timbre e.g. from bowed strings to plucked strings
- Allot different parts of the melody to different instruments
- Change the dynamics of all of it or part of it
- Change the articulations
- Change the way part or all of it is played

Other:
- Add something contrasting in the middle
- Juxtapose different versions or parts of different versions

You can also create combinations of the above or take ideas through one process and then another and another....

It might also be useful to look back at what you created in the generating ideas phase to see if there are ideas you could use from there.

*The Big Turtle Fanfare from the South China Sea: György Ligeti*

**Accompaniments and textures**

*Developing ideas vertically*

**Introduction:**

Creating accompaniments for your main ideas can create change the feel of your fanfare. There are lots of different ways of creating accompaniments. With the ideas below remember to think carefully about which instrument or group of instruments you would like to play your accompaniment(s). You could use more than one of the ideas outline below.

A good piece of music to listen to that helps makes different kinds of accompaniment clear is the first movement of Stravinsky’s *Three Pieces for String Quartet*. Here the four instruments have very distinct musical roles and you can clearly hear a drone, the solo line, an ostinato and interruptions.

Other pieces of music to listen to are John Adam’s *Tromba Lontana* and *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*. In both these pieces lots of different ostinatos are layered on top of each other. In *Tromba Lontana* the ostinatos fit with each other but in *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* the ostinatos cross each other because they are different lengths which results in the overall texture constantly changing. Also in *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* the ostinatos come in one at a time, building up the texture. It also has punctuations – listen out for the piccolo descending scale that cuts through everything else and for the drum crashes which seem to destabilize what is happening.

**Ostinatos:**

An ostinato is a pattern that repeats. This could be melodic or rhythmic or both. Many kinds of music from Classical Indian music to minimalism to jazz use ostinatos (or riffs) as accompaniments. Sometimes more than one ostinato is layered on top of another to create more complex patterns. Ostinatos can stop and start or change the number of layers by stopping starting different ostinatos. Adding more and more ostinatos can build tension in music just as taking them away can release tension.
Rhythmic and melodic ostinatos:

People tend to associate ostinatos with percussion instruments and the rhythm section but any instruments in the orchestra could be used. Your ostinatos might fast repeating short high pitched melodies that use instruments at the top of the orchestra such as the flutes and piccolos or might be funky plucked double basses riffs.

You can create ostinatos by:

- Experimenting through playing along with a recording of the main idea, building tracks using Garage Band or …..
- Extracting a small rhythmic or melodic idea from something you have already created and repeating it. You could keep it at the same speed as the original or speed it up or slow it down.
- Use the rhythmic ideas from the rhythm section to generate new ideas
- Look back over all the ideas you have created – is there something there that could be used?

Drones:

A drone is a special kind of ostinato and usually refers to a long held note beneath the main musical idea. This note might change pitch occasionally and might change colour through instrumentation, articulation, dynamics or different instrumental techniques. Changing dynamics and technique can create tension or release in the music e.g.

- a crescendo in the drone increases the tension
- going from tremolo strings to bowed strings could release the tension
- moving from a note that sounds dissonant to one that sounds consonant would release the tension

The note or notes you choose could be notes of your mode or a note which is dominant in your melody or you might want to experiment by ear.

Punctuations and interruptions:

Punctuation or interruption refers to a musical idea that interacts with the main musical idea. A punctuation fits with what else is going on and can highlight the main idea whereas an interruption cuts across the main idea creating contrast and seeming to put the music of its course. What you decide to do will depend on the character you want for your fanfare. Your musical punctuation or interruption could be completely new idea or they could be taken from existing rhythms or melodic ideas you have generated previously – maybe with its character changed.

Cloud textures:

What is meant by a cloud is texture which is made up of lots of almost identical simple musical ideas which repeat but not necessarily in a rhythmic/metronomic way. One to way to imagine this it to think about different textures: for example, a doormat’s bristly texture is made of lots and lots of little spikes or, the rough texture of corrugated cardboard being made up of lots and lots of ridges.

Musically, a cloud texture might be made up of lots and lots of staccato individual plucked notes on string instruments or layers of rippling fast melodic lines in the woodwind. If the there are lots of these ideas happening close together we would call it a dense texture, whereas if they are spaced out we would call it a sparse texture. Textures might evolve to become more or less dense and therefore help to either build or release tension in the music.

A composer who used lots of cloud textures is Gyorgy Ligeti. Listen to Atmospheres to hear an example. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWlwCRIVh7M
Contrasting material:

Listen to Britten’s *Fanfare for St. Edmundsbury*. In this fanfare there are contrasting different fanfares that are initially played individually and then played all at once. Though initially it might sound cacophonous it creates an extraordinary effect. Another composer who liked to layer very different melodic material on top of each other is the American composer Charles Ives. Listen to his 4th Symphony starting at 10:10, where there are multiple marching band tunes simultaneously.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c14faEPytCw

Your contrasting material might use elements of your original musical idea or might be completely new material. Click here to create contrasting material.

Creating layers:

One way to structure your musical ideas is to layer them. Three different examples of layering that you could use can be heard in:

1. In Britten’s *Fanfare for St. Edmundsbury* three contrasting melodies are layered on top of each other.
2. In John Adams’ *Tromba Lontana* you can hear layers of ostinatos with a melody on top.
3. In the first movement of Stravinsky’s *Three Pieces for String Quartet* the layers include a drone, an ostinato, a solo melody and interruptions.

Juxtaposing musical ideas:

If you have created contrasting material you might want to chop it up and juxtapose sections of the different ideas in sequence to create your fanfare. The speed with which you change between your different ideas can create or release tension i.e. the faster you move between different bits of material the greater the tension.

Building and releasing tension in your music:

Creating an effective structure for your fanfare also involves building and releasing tension. Building tension in music can be done by:

- Increasing the tempo
- Using faster notes
- Adding in more new notes from the mode to the melody
- Rising in pitch
- Spreading the pitch higher and lower simultaneously
- Increasing the density of events
- Changing the harmony from consonance to dissonance or moving through degrees of dissonance
- Making the texture thicker by adding more voices
- Getting louder
- Increasing the dynamic contrast
- Adding a timbral change such as tremolo in the strings
- Combinations of the above

To decrease and release tension the opposites apply.
ORGANIZING YOUR IDEAS

You will already have thought about how you are going to orchestrate your musical ideas. I.e which musical instrument you would like to play which bits of your music.

This section includes ideas of how you might further organize your musical ideas/melodies, their variations and the accompaniments you might have created.

Antiphonal: Two instruments or groups of instruments play alternate musical phrases of the fanfare (sometimes with the same dynamic sometimes a contrasting one).

Punctuation: As mentioned earlier. One instrument or group of instruments plays the main melody with another instrument or group coming in at certain points to punctuate particular moments. Listen to Movement I of Stravinsky’s *Three pieces for String Quartet* for an example of this. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUepDjGgUnc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUepDjGgUnc)

Hocket: A single melody of the fanfare is divided up among two (or occasionally more) instruments or groups of instruments such that when one voice sounds the other rests. Listen to *Hoketus* by Louis Andressien for an example of this.

Canon: The melody of the fanfare is imitated by a second voice (and third, fourth...) after a given duration. The second voice plays either an exact imitation or one that keeps the same intervals, rhythms or pitches. Also known as a round. In Stravinsky’s *Fanfare for a New Theatre* though the two trumpets start together they then play in canon.

Polyphonic: The simultaneous playing of different versions of the melody.

As you make decisions about organizing your musical ideas you may need to lengthen durations/notes, add rests and shift the musical lines until they work effectively with each other.
Notation is something that many people struggle with but doesn’t have to be very complicated. The first thing to decide is WHO the notation is for? If it is simply for yourself to remember what you have done then you can do it in any way you like. If, however, you have to communicate your ideas to other people who will be playing your piece it’s useful to have an idea of the best way of writing things down. This doesn’t necessarily mean that you have to use ‘conventional’ notation, although if you were getting your piece played by an orchestra then this would be the easiest (and quickest) way of hearing the music. The other thing that is important is to have a clear idea of what the most important things are that you want to communicate. It might be that the exact pitches aren’t what gives the music its character, so you might not worry about that! Or, it might be that you want a particular dramatic effect that needs a written instruction? (For the 2013 ROH Fanfares George and William called their piece “Tigers Earthquake” which was a great shortcut to understanding what the music should sound like!).

If you don’t read/write ‘conventional’ notation and are submitting a piece for the Fanfare competition don’t worry about notating as all entries are judged by the audio file and winners will be working with composer Duncan Chapman to create a score for the orchestra to play.

Some examples which might give you a few ideas......

‘Conventional’ notation (from Lumiére by Imogen Brown, Fanfare winner 2013)

Guitar TAB (and conventional notation), the TAB notation tells you which strings to play and the pattern.....
Japanese Shakuhachi notation, this is part of Tamuke written in the 16th Century, read from top to bottom the notation tells the player which holes on the instrument to cover and how to blow, it is a set of instructions for WHAT to do to create the music.

‘Piano Roll’ notation produced by computer. This shows the pitches, their lengths and timings but doesn’t show any dynamics,
This notation is part of a piece for 6 players spread about the performance space (by Duncan Chapman) the notation specifies the relationships between the players but doesn’t say which notes are to be played. There are two durations a click sound (⁺) and a long note

This is part of a piece for solo cello, *Renga*, by Mike McInerney.

Like the TAB this shows what to do on each string but has more indications of the mood and flow of the music with lots of dynamics and gesture.
LISTENING

All the music mentioned below are pieces referred to within this resource and are available as audio files on the ROH website for listening.

The Big Turtle Fanfare from the South China Sea: György Ligeti

This short 39 second fanfare was taken from a larger piece for puppet theatre. Composed for solo trumpet it demonstrates how a very simple idea can be varied and added to.

Fanfare for a new theatre: Igor Stravinsky

Stravinsky wrote this for the opening of the New York State Theatre for two trumpets who were meant to be placed either side of the balcony. It is 40 seconds long and the melodic line is a 12 tone row. After the first bar, which the trumpets play together, the two trumpets play in canon using all inverted, retrograde, and retrograde-inverted rows. The tone row is in a symmetrical with the four first and the four last intervals being the same, but in reversed order.

Fanfare for St. Edmundsbury: Benjamin Britten

Fanfare for St Edmundsbury is for three trumpets and was composed for a ‘Pageant of Magna Carta’ in the grounds of St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds in 1959. It consists of three separate verses which are played one at a time and then simultaneously. Each verse is in a different key and could be played on natural trumpets (no keys or valves) and use the notes of the harmonic series. The three verses are also very different in style: the first, marked smooth, ripples up and down arpeggios, the second is a bouncy 6/8 marked brilliant, and the third is martial sounding and marked heroic.

When they are all played simultaneously the initial effect seems chaotic but as the music progresses unity emerges from the chaos as the long notes start to settle and overlap. In the last few bars the three trumpets play triumphant block chords together. The trumpets are instructed to place themselves as far apart as possible even if performed outdoors.

AppelInterstellaire: Olivier Messiaen

Messiaen composed this brief movement for solo horn as part of a collection of short pieces for solo instruments in memory of a young French composer called Jean-Pierre Guézec. The title translates as ‘Interstellar call’, as if this music were a horn call that reaches across the vast span of outer space. It is extraordinarily difficult for the player, who must master a range of techniques: flutter-tonguing, closed notes, glissandos, and faintly-sounded oscillations produced with the keys half-closed. Messiaen also uses calls of two birds — the Chinese Thrush and the Canyon Wren. He liked the piece so much he built a longer piece around it called......

TrombaLontana: John Adams

Composer John Adams said that TrombaLontana (literally ‘distant trumpet’) takes ‘a subversive point of view on the idea of the generic loud, extrovert archetype of the fanfare’. The four-minute work that barely rises about mezzo piano and features two stereophonically placed solo trumpets (to the back of the stage or on separate balconies), who play gently insistant calls, each marked by a sustained note followed by a soft staccato tattoo. He described the orchestra as providing ‘a pulsing continuum of serene ticking in the pianos, harps and percussion’ with a long, almost disembodied melody for strings that passes by almost unnoticed like nocturnal clouds in the background.
These two pieces are also known as Fanfare for Great Woods as the Great Woods Festival of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra commissioned them. Both derive their style from minimalism. The music is tonal and transforms over time through slow imperceptible changes in harmony. Repeating rhythmic patterns, ostinatos are layered and the shifting of their placement creates rhythmic dissonance and propels the music forward.