

VOYAGE of MUSICAL DISCOVERY

EDUCATION KIT

RACHAEL BEESLEY & NICOLE VAN BRUGGEN CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

NUMBER	02	TOPIC	CULTURAL NARRATIVES
DATE	JUNE 2023		QLD

AUSTRALIAN
ROMANTIC
CLASSICAL &
ORCHESTRA

RICHARD GILL AO | FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

LIVE

VOYAGE



IMAGE CREDIT Robert Catto

QLD

Monday 5 June, 11.30am–1.00pm

St Peters Lutheran College
Performing Arts Centre
Harts Road, Indooroopilly

Members of Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra

Georgia Browne | Flute
Tatjana Zimre | Oboe
Nicole van Bruggen | Clarinet
Anneke Scott | Horn
Lisa Goldberg | Bassoon
Jenna Sherry | Violin
Stephen King | Viola
Daniel Yeadon | Cello
Rob Nairn | Double Bass

Louise FARRENC
Nonet in E flat major, Op.38 (1849)



Tango Enigmático

Camilo FERRERO
Enigmático

Ignacio VARCHAUSKY & Andrés LINETZKY *Nuevo y vivo*

Alessandra GELFINI
Vals Sentimental

Owen Henry SALOMÉ
Como me siento

Cécile ELTON
The Thrilling Encounter

Owen Henry SALOMÉ
Bueco

Visit www.arco.org.au/voyage
for booking information

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INTRODUCTION

The *Voyage of Musical Discovery* presents musical works of different times, places and styles along with spoken explanations. The first half features orchestral and chamber music from the Classical and Romantic eras performed in a historically-informed style. The second takes recently-written Australian works performed by a guest ensemble, often including the composers themselves.

This **Education Kit** works as a stand-alone learning resource, but full educational benefit is achieved by working through the activities in conjunction with attending a live *Voyage* presentation.

TEACHERS

CULTURAL NARRATIVES

How to integrate this material into the classroom

To identify and better understand *Cultural Narratives* in music, this Education Kit consists of:

TASKS

Locating, listening to and discussing specific features and compositional approaches in the following music:

TANGO ENIGMÁTICO (various composers)

Nonet in E-flat major, Op.38 – Movt. I
Louise FARRENC

ACTIVITIES

Testing some of the ideas through creative arrangement, composition and performance exercises

There is adequate material here for **two or three timetabled classes** – and more if you decide to do all of the larger projects at the end.

A specific composer, work and/or section is introduced and described, then the tasks and activities appear on the subsequent **left-hand / even-numbered pages**. It may be helpful to print or save these individually to share with the students.

The opposite **right-hand / odd-numbered pages** are guides for you – including suggested responses and tips for assisting with the practical activities.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Orange boxes like these contain extra related information and/or links

- clarification of terms
- tips for extending material across multiple sessions
- suggestions for overlap with wider areas of learning

QLD

The activities in this Education Kit and in the live Voyage presentation address concepts of music through learning experiences in performance, composition, musicology and aural training within the context of a range of styles, periods and genres. To do this, core elements of composition, performance and musicology are introduced and discussed, and connections between current Australian music and Classical and Romantic repertoire are identified.

This program is closely aligned with the QCAA secondary school music curriculum and is ideal for Senior Music and Music Extension students in preparation for internal assessments and external exams, and is also appropriate for younger music elective students.

Specific curriculum areas covered:

Overall Syllabus Objectives – Communicating Meaning

When students compose and perform music, they express music ideas through the purposeful manipulation of music elements to communicate meaning. Audiences interpret intent and meaning through this musical communication.

Unit 4: Narratives

In Unit 4, students focus on their emerging voice and style through making and responding to music. They understand that music elements can be manipulated to expressively communicate narrative. The narrative may appear as music alone, or in conjunction with film, video game, or similar. Through the combination of music and narrative, composers can provoke strong emotional responses from audiences. The unit aims to develop a more sophisticated understanding of how music elements have been manipulated for specific storytelling purposes.

In **Music Extension (Composition)**, the kit addresses **Key Ideas**: 1. Initiate best practice (**Unit 3 Explore**), 2. Consolidate best practice (**Unit 3 Explore**), and 3. Independent best practice (**Unit 4 Emerge**).

Across multiple year levels, the following syllabus objectives are covered: 1. apply literacy skills, 2. evaluate music and ideas about music, 3. examine music and ideas about music, 4. express meaning, emotion or ideas about music, 5. apply compositional devices, 6. manipulate music elements and concepts, 7. resolve music ideas.

Supports specific music elements and concepts of duration, expressive devices, pitch, structure, texture, timbre and the development of the following **21st-century skills** as identified in the Music Extension syllabus:

- critical thinking
- creative thinking
- communication
- collaboration and teamwork
- personal and social skills
- information & communication technologies (ICT) skills

CULTURAL NARRATIVES

DISCUSSION

Why is music important for you?

Why study music? And how?

What is a cultural narrative?

What do music and culture have in common?

What are actions?

How does music make you feel?

As educators and musicians, our intention with the information presented here is not to tell you what music you should teach or listen to. Instead we offer some signposts and activities for discovering new ways for historical and contemporary music to be thought-provoking in the classroom.

Depending upon the experience of your group and as an introduction to the overall topic, either have your students read or listen to the following text, or get a discussion started with the questions on the left (page 6) and augment that with the information below as required.

One of music's great strengths is its **ability to express things** that are difficult to describe with words or symbols. In this way, music can act as a mirror or metaphor for wider **cultural issues** and themes. However, to see the **connections between music and culture** can require some recalibration. That means being open to new angles and approaches that may challenge and build upon established expectations on the **role of music education**.

A shortcoming of music education is that it tends to place a lot of emphasis on printed notation and the instruments that produce the sounds. These are important, but if we want to get closer to understanding **what music means** – and how it gives us insights into wider culture – we must look more closely at **actions**. In other words, we turn our attention to **what people do** (this idea comes from Christopher Small's 1998 book *Musicking – The Meanings of Performing and Listening*).

Well, what do people do?

They **interpret, interact, negotiate** and **discuss**.

And as in our day-to-day lives, a lot of this doing is creative, spontaneous, social, non-verbal, and at times ambiguous (these terms come from the *Handbook of Musical Identities* edited by Raymond MacDonald, 2017).

Music itself doesn't do anything. It isn't alive and it isn't a language, but nor does it belong in a glass case in a museum. What is important is the **context** in which it is created, performed and listened to and the surrounding discussions. And these involve you!

In Todd Field's 2022 film *Tár*, the main character (played by Cate Blanchett) is an accomplished conductor who grapples with many of these very questions. In a scene early in the film and set at The Julliard School in New York, she urges the university students to respect the canon of Classical music and Bach in particular. She comes across as self-aggrandising and her arguments are flawed, but one has the feeling – and this is intended – that she is trying to convince herself as much as she is the Gen Z students. Now is the time to interpret something anew, she implores, and it's always the question that involves the listener and never the answer. And most significantly, she asks **how music makes us feel** – a sentiment poignantly echoed toward the end of the film when she watches a [video of Leonard Bernstein](#) address the same question.

Throughout the following material, let us agree to come back often to this question:

How does the music make you feel?

Observe the way these feelings change with each additional layer of information, and notice our own cultural narratives coming into focus along the way.



TANGO ENIGMÁTICO

Tango Enigmático is a Brisbane-based ensemble specialising in Argentinian tango music. The three members are **Chloe Ann Williamson** (double bass), **Cara Tran** (piano) and **Flora Wong** (violin). Together, their vision is to circulate and promote tango music in Australia. By blending classics from the golden age of tango with compositions from now, they demonstrate with each and every sound that this style of music is a living and evolving urban art form.

[Read more about the musicians](#)

Historically, tango as a whole can be divided into distinct chronological periods, and as with Western classical music history there are connections between these as well as important differences. Modern performers such as **Tango Enigmático** understand the stylistic nuances that exist from period to period, and in a similar way to historically-informed performance practice in classical music – these differences are *not printed on the page*. When reading and looking at tango notation, it is more helpful to think in terms of a leadsheet as used by jazz musicians – it's an aural tradition and if there is a score, it's a scaffold or starting point. More about this later.

Further, due to tango's shorter history it can feel a little easier for us to grasp and identify the cultural narratives across the music as a whole. While not entirely free from the usual stories of class and gender imbalance and cultural appropriation, the style nonetheless spread across the world in an unusual way. It was particularly popular in Helsinki, and today one can hear tango groups and performers thriving all over the globe.

With the help of the activities, information and discussions in this kit, we will try to find out more about the elements of the music and its unpretentious dance origins that make it so appealing.

Looking at the list of works on the following page, note that there are examples of the three main styles of tango that exist within the larger genre: *tango*, *milonga*, *vals*

The Works

Camilo FERRERO

Enigmático

(tango)

▶ [watch/listen](#)

Ignacio VARCHAUSKY & Andrés LINETZKY

Nuevo y vivo

(tango)

▶ [watch/listen](#)

Alessandra GELFINI

Vals Sentimental

(vals)

▶ [watch/listen](#)

Owen Henry SALOMÉ

Como me siento

(slow milonga)

▶ [watch/listen](#)

Cécile ELTON

The Thrilling Encounter

(fast milonga)

▶ [watch/listen](#)

Owen Henry SALOMÉ

Bueco

(Argentinian Zamba)

STYLES

Watch and listen to the following six short clips and arrange them in order of old to recent based on your impressions of the music and sound. The oldest is from the early 20th century and the most recent from the beginning of the 21st.

A**B****C****D****E****F**

D

guardia vieja (old guard) – origins and first generation of players who immigrated to Buenos Aires and Montevideo in the early years of the 20th century. It was this period where the music's first associations with gangsters and brothels began – dance music played on portable instruments such as flute, guitar, violin and bandoneón (a type of concertina or accordion)

C

guardia nueva (new guard) – in the 1920s and '30s tango spread to Europe beginning in France and this was also the beginning of the stylised and often overly-sexualised depictions of tango in movies. It had moved out of the gangster world, but the lyrics were still typically macho and one-sided – an ongoing lament to the constant pain that men supposedly suffer at the hands of women!

A

Golden Age – this period from the mid-1930s to the early '50s roughly coincided with the big band era in the United States. The tango ensemble was now called an orchestra and increased in size to 12 or more players. New instruments were added, lyrics started appearing in languages other than Spanish, many recordings were made, and for the first time performances took place with choreographed dancing on stage for an audience to watch rather than join in. The beginning of Rock 'n Roll gradually signalled the end of the Golden Age – particularly in Europe.

F

Tango nuevo – roughly spanning the 1970–90s, this style is closely associated with Argentinian composer Ástor Piazzolla. In tango nuevo, multilayered harmonies from modern jazz started appearing, the orchestrations became more complex and also included extended improvised solos and electronics.

B

A Buenos Aires-based **rebirth** of sorts occurred in the late-1990s and early 2000s with new songs harking back to the grandiosity of the Golden Age tango orchestras.

E

Neotango is often used to describe the tango style(s) emerging in the 21st century. While retaining a backbone of tango, the layers and rhythms have become more intertwined with the addition of samples, beats and electronica.

ACTIVITY

FEELING RHYTHMS

While keeping some of those previous tracks in mind, listen to *A Thrilling Encounter* performed by **Tango Enigmático**

Take particular note of:

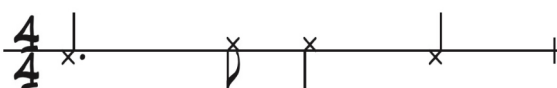
- the percussive effects created with the string instruments
- the bass pattern(s) and how the other instruments rhythmically interact with it

In groups of three and using only hands and body, your job is to somehow recreate the rhythmic feel of this *milonga*.

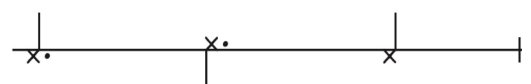
Choose different surfaces to drum and tap on to replicate low, middle or high sounds, set a tempo and get your version of the basis rhythm rolling along.

Once it is established, make a few variations and add a few fills – but don't let it get too busy.

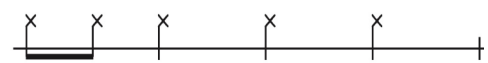
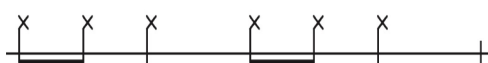
a. basic bass pattern



b. variation



c. subdivided



d. add more layers



The reason for this activity is to allow the students to experience the shift in focus from instruments and notation to **ways of playing and interacting**. Music across multiple styles, periods and in many cultures comes to life through all the little actions of the players – reading between the lines if lines even exist!

SUBDIVISION

For students and musicians used to a bar of 4 divided evenly down the middle in quavers, the 3+3+2 grouping can seem unfamiliar. Practise **c.** alone to get a feeling for the subdivision and where the natural accents fall (on the 1, 2+, and 4). For younger students find three and two syllable words to fit the rhythm – e.g., *coconut, banana kiwi*

VARIATIONS

Let the bass pattern change back and forth between **a.** and **b.** or even **c.** depending upon what else is going on in the other parts. These are just suggestions – if a player keeps roughly to these groupings then there of course many other patterns possible. Try them out!

ADDITIONAL LAYERS

These are suggestions for the extra parts – build on the bass pattern and add a little bit more rhythmic interest including small improvised statements as if to entice people to get up and dance!

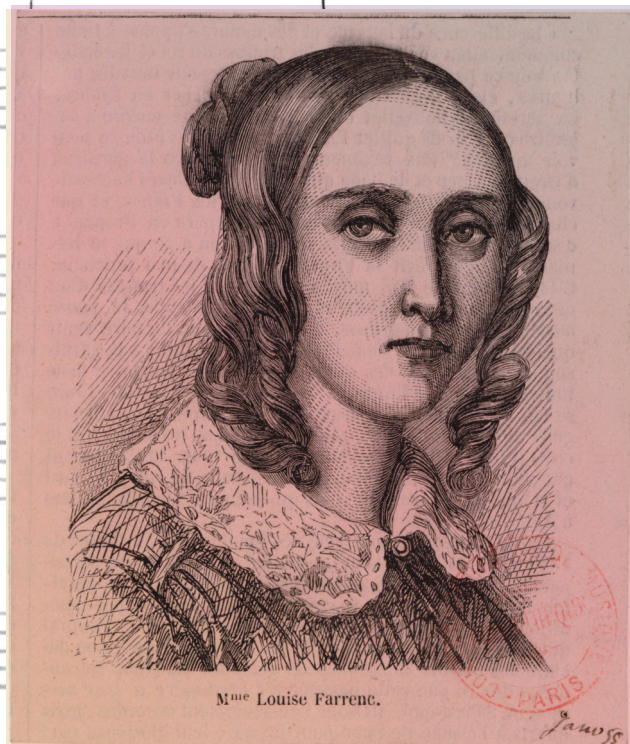
As an extra experiment, individual players can see what happens when they either push certain beats forward (playing slightly ahead of the beat) or delay others (laying back), as opposed to placing them right in the middle. Does the groove still work if different players push or drag simultaneously?

In a world of click tracks and digital synchronisation, it's worth remembering that rhythm is not as absolute as we might think. Again, in many styles of music – and especially in the period before recordings – musicians took many more liberties with rhythm and timing. This can emphasise certain notes and lines or express urgency or relaxedness. It's the perfect example of actions – musicians working together and interacting spontaneously.

The Nonet in E-flat Op.38 was composed in 1849 by **Louise Farrenc** (1804–75). Despite being neither widely performed nor well known nowadays, Farrenc was a highly-regarded Paris-based pianist, composer, author, educator and musicologist. She won the *Prix Chartier* of the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* in 1861 and again in 1869, and was appointed Professor of Piano at the Paris Conservatoire in 1842. In the 1820s and '30s she composed exclusively for the piano, and wrote and published an authoritative multi-volume guide to historical piano performance. She later composed chamber works for many different combinations of instruments, and the nonet perfectly embodies a style and level of skill that confirms Farrenc as a significant compositional voice.

Pianist Composer Author
Educator Musicologist

LOUISE FARRENC



Compositrices – New Light On French Romantic Women Composers

In 2023, a new 8-CD recording was released of over ten hours of music by Augusta Holmes, Charlotte Sohy, Cecile Chaminade, Clemence de Grandval, Hedwige Chretien, Helene de Montgeroult, Henriette Renië, Jeanne Danglas, Lili Boulanger, Louise Farrenc, Madeleine Jaeger, Madeleine LeMariey, Marie Jaell, Marie-Foscarine Damaschino, Marthe Bracquemond, Marthe Grumbach, Melanie (Mel) Bonis, Nadia Boulanger, Pauline Viardot-Garcia, Rita Strohl, Virginie Morel. It's on Tidal and Spotify – start listening today!

125.

Nonet in E_b, Op.38

AUDIO

[listen to Movt. 1](#)



SCORES

[Original manuscript in composer's handwriting](#)

[Newer typeset version](#)

Tension & Release

Our feelings and responses to music are often also triggered by subtle shifts in harmony. As listeners we sense an interplay of tension and release, though it can be sometimes difficult to know precisely what it is in the chords that's causing the different reactions. Farrenc's Nonet is filled with modulations that are surprising for a number of reasons. First, considering the time the work was composed, she chooses unconventional destination chords and second, she reaches them by way of rich harmonic pivot chords. As can be heard and seen in the following example, there is already a strong suggestion of the sort of chromatic harmonies that the late-Romantic, early-Modernist, Impressionist and jazz composers would go on to develop.

[Watch this short biography](#) of Farrenc (it is in French but there are English captions)



1849
L. Farrenc

Nonet in E \flat , Op.38 – Movt. I

[listen to this excerpt](#) at least three times (7:16–7:25) 2nd ending

16

164

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Hn.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

167

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Hn.

Bsn.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

1

2

3

4

5

6

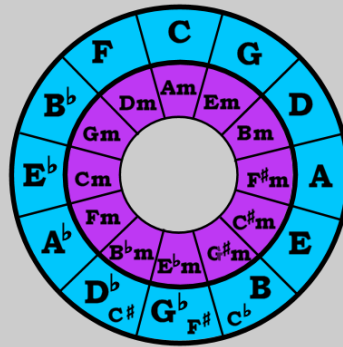
7

8

Quick Background to Modulation

Music of the Classical period, as well as thousands of pop songs and jazz standards years later, modulates frequently by way of related chords. You would most likely have encountered this already with the **Circle of Fifths** – modulating to adjacent keys in the circle means there are lots of notes that both the old and new keys have in common. That means that the change of key can be smooth – a new sense of home is created for the listener by way of a transition that isn't too jarring or disorienting.

This section from the first movement of the Nonet moves from a home key of $E\flat$ to D . A semitone apart, these two keys only have two notes in common – the D and G ! How does it work?



Transpositions

Clarinet in $B\flat$

Horn in $E\flat$

4

Here the harmony moves again – with flute and upper viola tone changing to a G . This turns the B^{o7} into a G^7/B – also outlined in the violin line.

3

In the second-time bar, the bass, cello and bassoon move to a $B\flat$. With some rearranging of pitches in the other parts, the chord slides to a B^{o7} (demonstrate $B-D-F-A\flat$ on the piano – notice the built-in tension created by the diminished sound of stacked minor thirds).

2

(The $B\flat$ triad becomes $B\flat^7$ – a standard V heading back to the $E\flat$ I in Bar 24 at the beginning of the *Allegro*.)

8

A final semitone bass ascent brings us to D major.

7

This does a similar thing as before and morphs into an $A^7/C\sharp$, also outlined in the violin with an added $\flat 9$ ($B\flat$) for spice.

1

The process is set up by landing on a $B\flat$ chord – we've already heard this material because the section is repeated.

6

Two bars later, the shift to $C\sharp$ similarly forms a $C\sharp^{o7}$ chord – and with it a return of instability.

5

Another semitone higher in the bass lands the harmony in a Cm triad – consonant and calm again.

Ultimately, the move from unrelated keys of $E\flat$ to D does take place via chords in common and the shifts are steered by the chromatically ascending bass line. This disguises the harmonic flips back and forth between **tension** and **release** – it keeps the listener guessing and propels the music forward with small sparks of electricity. And like a series of quick video edits we are left wondering: what on earth just happened and how did we suddenly get there?

TENSION



RELEASE



TASK
CHORDS

By listening and/or looking at the score, locate another passage of harmonic action in the first movement – even just two adjacent contrasting or rich-sounding chords.

- Identify all the vertical notes – remembering to take into account the transpositions
- Figure out what each chord could be – *in most cases it will be either a major or minor triad and sometimes with extensions, or extra flavour notes*
- Give it a chord symbol
- Try to calculate the progression or harmonic road map (V-I / I-IV etc)
- Describe the effect it has on you

This is one of the best ways to understand how harmony works – listening and labelling to figure out what's going on behind the harmonic scenes. Sometimes the answers are not clear cut and that's okay.

Each time you do such an exercise it gets easier, and the skills you gain will seep into your own playing, improvising and composing regardless of the musical style. And most importantly, like adding filters and effects to an image, it expands your creative toolkit for placing layers of contrast, surprise and ambiguity into the music.

And whether a custom-designed instrument, the interaction between personalities, a new interpretation of a letter, colour, thought or feeling, or even a single unexpected chord – these are the musical nuts and bolts of cultural narratives...



NETWORKS

SWARMS

NON-BINARY

PROGRESS

Farrenc's Nonet contains many examples that resemble what contemporary network theory researchers refer to as assemblages or swarms – collections of different elements working independently but in a synchronised and coordinated way.

Vertical clusters of notes formed into chords fit the swarm theory – the individual notes taking on different roles to form new entities. And chords arranged horizontally work together to form an entire patchwork of tension and release. Thinking of music in this way gives us the freedom to build whatever chords and structures we want – the ears can ultimately decide what works and what doesn't.

Globally, the ensemble of strings and winds mixed in an uneven grouping (i.e., 5 and 4) is also a type of assemblage – and was a fairly uncommon instrumental grouping at the time. Then the writing of the different instrumental lines in almost every passage is intrinsically democratic – voices working together and each with something different and important to say.

How is any of this a cultural narrative?

The blurring of boundaries between traditionally binary opposites is exciting and makes life interesting. It makes us feel something!

twilight where land and sky meet on the horizon
 winter | summer
 light and shadow
 sweet and savoury
 Montagues and Capulets / Sharks and Jets
 live | sampled
 gender
 Heaven and Hell
 Artificial Intelligence
 human vs. machine

brainstorm to add to this list...

Art and music can help us realise that there is a fluid interconnectedness between different or parallel worlds. A piece such as Farrenc's – even when from a different historical period – can prompt us to question some of our own inflexible opinions and standpoints. And this can lead to change and progress including in areas outside music.

ACTIVITIES

1 MOVE

Movement and dance is music's action-based cousin – and in many cultures and styles you could even argue that music's main purpose is for dance!

This may seem like an unusual exercise, but give it a try.

Choose one or two songs from this playlist:

► [The Gotan Project](#)

The activity is to just dance. We're not talking about proper dance moves, or being cool or hip – just move like nobody's watching and let the music pull you in whatever directions it wants.

2 RUBBISH COLLECTION

Collect objects, rubbish, waste, packaging, recycling, paper etc. from around the school – clean if necessary, and design a huge collaborative collage. Mix up or combine similar colours or materials, and create some perspective with small and large objects. If it's easier to photograph the objects, then print them and arrange them – do so. Or a combination of real and printed?

► [Watch this video on artist Mandy Barker's photographs of ocean plastics for inspiration](#)

Once finished, this is your musical score – play it on the sound sculpture if you made one or gather appropriate sound-makers from around the room to represent the different shapes, colours and densities of the collected materials.



[Watch this astounding example of turning everyday objects into something creative and beautiful – including the sound design itself](#)

These are all larger projects – depending on how much time you can set aside, choose any or all or freely combine parts and ideas from each.

3 SAMPLE

A final option is to work with your own samples – then there is of course the chance to sample the sound sculpture and take these sounds to complete either activity 2 or 3.

The best app to use is [KOALA SAMPLER](#) – available for Android and iOS. It isn't free, but for what you get, the \$7.99 price is more than reasonable. The first digital samplers from the 1980s cost the price of approximately two houses and could only do a fraction of what KOALA can do!

▶ [Tutorial – basic operation](#)

▶ [Tutorial – 5 Tips](#)

The tutorials always focus on drum patterns, as this is assumed to be what consumers want. However, for this project think more in terms of soundscape or sound collage – there may be small pockets of rhythm but don't be too governed by beats. The app functions the same way, regardless of what sounds you make!

SAMPLE

Spread out and explore as if gathering objects, but collect sounds instead – take some headphones for listening as you record. Be careful of the wind and scraping, moving or talking near the microphone. Limit your recording to no more than 10 separate clips, keep them short, then find somewhere quiet to clean them up – i.e., trim unwanted noises from the beginnings or ends of clips or isolate the best bits. Make some adjustments to volume and pitch and see what they sound like reversed and/or looped. Delete what you don't need, but remember there is no undo.

SEQUENCE

Duplicate and modify a few of the cleaned-up samples, and do some test playing by tapping them in realtime to make some sequences. Shorter one-shot samples work best for this, and try without the metronome. For longer pitch-based sounds switch on the keyboard feature to hear the samples in various registers and notice if and how the timbre changes.

PERFORM

Once you are comfortable with how it all works, record the different sequences into a longer performance, sliding some effects in and out as you go.

Remember to think sound collage rather than song, like an audio version of objects arranged on paper. Combine different textures, being sure that there is variation and contrast – tension and release – among the various musical parameters. Aim to make it sound like a swarm of living and breathing entities, entering and leaving in different ways but always with direction and purpose. Save the finished file, and if you have the possibility over cloud storage to export each and open them on one device, then a further option would be to combine multiple files into one longer one.

This may all take a little bit of practice and trial and error, but it is totally worth it!

Three of the most important cultural challenges facing us today are addressing climate change, ensuring gender identity and equality, and guaranteeing proper recognition of Indigenous and colonised peoples. Music can't solve any of these issues alone, but in everything from discussions to campaigns for increasing public awareness, the creation, performance and reception of music involves a similar lively swarm of individuals working together.

Even when the things we do feel tiny and insignificant, they can still bring about change and redress past injustices. And as we have seen by looking at the works above, understanding and becoming fluent with the many actions involved in making music can refine our ability to engage with and cope with unpredictability and uncertainty in the real world.

Finally, in the words of author Hanif Kureishi "*make something new everyday, something one has never done before.*"

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DESIGN & INNOVATION

MARCH 2023

MUSICAL IDENTITIES

AUGUST 2023

www.arco.org.au/voyage

AUSTRALIAN
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