

Trumpets and Drums

Overview

“Trumpets and drums - creating drama without actors...” An introduction to writing music and designing sound for the stage

An interactive workshop, with practical examples and composing / mixing sessions.

No hardcore music theory, just a straight-forward look at how to use music to build mood, drama and tension

An outline of the subjects to be covered follows below...

Instruments

Instrumentation

Strings, woodwinds, brass, guitars, percussion, other
Instrument groupings

The Orchestra

Traditional orchestra set up
Orchestra variations
Adding to an orchestra
Orchestral soundtrack examples - John Williams, Jerry Goldsmith

Percussion

Traditional orchestral percussion
The drum kit
Other percussion
Percussive examples - Bear McCreary

Electronica

Synthesizers
Samplers
Sequencers and Midi
Electronica examples - Scanner, Juno Reactor

Effects

Atmospherics
Noise
Delay, echo, phasing, modulation
Sound design
Sound design examples - Hans Zimmer

Mood

Why does some music sound happy? Why does some music sound sad?

Major and minor keys
Key changes
Mood examples - Murray Gold

Juxtaposition of mood

What happens when we mix things up?
Examples of blurring the lines - Michael Nyman

Tempo

What is tempo?
What is fast and slow?

How can we play with tempo?
Tempo examples - Sean Callery

Events

Surprise
Suspense
The kiss
The death
The chase

Playing with audience expectation

Letting the audience breathe
Shocking an audience
Scaring an audience
Examples of the above - Jerry Goldsmith, Bernard Herrmann

The Script

Working with a director

What is the director's vision?
How can you enhance that vision?
What does the director want?
Saying 'no'

Working without a director

Interpretation
Textual keys
Taking your queue from actors
Examples from Mourning Primrose, After Dinner and Four.

Leitmotif

Mapping characters and events

Melody or chord progression?

Putting it together to build a score

Examples from Mourning Primrose, John Williams, Murray Gold

Main Title Theme

What do you want to say?

Some famous themes
Why do they work, what do they say?
Examples - John Williams, Barry Gray

How do you want the audience to feel?

Threading the theme through your score

Variations on a theme
Key, tempo, juxtaposition
Examples of variations - Elgar, John Williams, Ron Goodwin

Closing the play

Closing theme, leaving them happy - or not
Example from Mourning Primrose

How Others Do It

Discussion

Murray Gold - 'Doctor Who - Doomsday'

Michael Nyman - 'The Draughtsman's Contract - Chasing Sheep'
Bear McCreary - 'Battlestar Galactica - Prelude to War'

More Information

Each section will contain practical examples from film and television as well as composing sessions
For many of the sections examples from Finn Brit productions will be used
In the final section the goal is to use the techniques introduced during the day to critique the pieces being listened to.