

Planning your Programme: A Primer

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The Basics of a Programme

The Basics of a Programme

- A programme can be split into several parts
- Three which support:
 - The **concept** (intellectual theme)
 - The **soundtrack** (aural theme)
 - The **aesthetic** (visual theme)
- ...and two key elements:
 - The **composition**
 - The **orchestration**

The Basics: The Concept

- The **concept** is the story behind the programme
 - What is the programme about?
 - What story are you trying to get across?
 - What do you want the viewer to feel or think about during/after your programme?

The Basics: The Soundtrack

- **Soundtrack** is the term we use for the aural theme
 - What music will you use?
 - Will you use multiple or different aural ideas?
 - Multiple pieces of music?
 - Multiple versions of the same piece of music?
 - Something other than music?

The Basics: The Aesthetic

- The **aesthetic** relates to the use of colour and visual motif
 - What colour scheme will you use (if any)?
 - Is it designed to be:
 - Concordant (colours fitting into one palette)
 - Discordant (colours in deliberate opposition)
 - What are your costumes and floor choices?
 - Will you use scenery or props to alter the visual dynamic?

The Basics: The Composition

- **Composition** is the process of *planning* visual events in the programme
 - What events occur in your soundtrack?
 - How significant are they?
 - Do the events in your composition make logical sense?
 - Is there a flow to the composition?
- The musical equivalent is writing the basic melodic idea for a piece of music

The Basics: The Orchestration

- **Orchestration** is the process of *realizing* the composition with specific vocabulary and effects
 - How does the soundtrack sound?
 - How can you reflect that visually?
 - Do you have a variety of visual effects?
- The musical equivalent is deciding exactly what notes each instrument will play

Putting It Together

- By putting all of these elements together in a *planned and pleasing fashion*, the programme achieves:
 - **UNITY:** all of the visual and aural ideas form a coherent entity; something greater than its parts
 - *Ensemble Analysis looks for this*
 - **EFFECT:** the visual and aural ideas provoke intellectual, emotional or aesthetic reaction from the viewer which none could produce on their own
 - *General Effect looks for this*



Building Your Programme

Points to Consider

- Does the programme fit?
 - Your performers
 - Your guard's style
- Bear in mind that your guard and those in it have an identity and a personality
 - Not just performers; instructors too
 - Be wary of choosing a programme you can't design to...
 - ...or that you/your instructors can't teach

Points to Consider

- How accessible is the programme?
 - If you've come up with the idea, you're clearly buying into it, but...
 - How about the performers?
 - Instructors? Judges? Audience?
- Will you need to explain the programme in order for people to "get it"?
 - If so, think carefully before proceeding too far!

Choosing a Soundtrack

- Be diverse
- Stray from your comfort zone
- Brainstorm!
 - Initially, no idea is too crazy
 - Talk about the ideas with staff and/or members
 - See if other people have an angle on the soundtrack that you don't

Choosing a **GOOD** Soundtrack

- Does the soundtrack work for Winterguard?
- Does it have a good ending?
 - This doesn't necessarily mean a "big" ending; we can do subtle too!
- Does it suggest variety?
- Is it interesting?
 - Will it hold attention and provide something useful to build on right throughout the programme?

Choosing a **GOOD** Soundtrack

- Does it have “moments” you can identify?
- Has the music been done to death, or is strongly identifiable with another unit?
 - We know soundtrack clashes happen in a single season – no need to worry about this
- Is the music “tasty” – and tasteful?
 - Think carefully about appropriateness of lyrics, for example
 - You might consider editing soundtracks to deal with “awkward moments”

Personality and Congruence

- Does your programme fit your performers?
- Can your performers fit the programme?
- Thinking about “going against the soundtrack”?
 - Cadet and Junior: **DON'T**. Make sure your performers can understand the soundtrack – *incongruence or a “different visual soundtrack” is not a basic level challenge!*
 - 'A' and Open: Think carefully before taking this path...

Targeting the Show

- Does the programme have particular effect or design aims?
- Who is the show for?
 - Are you (the designer) trying to show how **intricate** and **clever** you are...
 - ...or are you trying to give the performers a programme which can offer them the **best performance experience**?
 - *Tough question! When you're writing repertoire or vocabulary, think carefully about this!*

Smart Design

- Design smartly!
- The criteria rewards *smart design* with *good ideas*:
 - *"How can I motivate/execute that transition elegantly?"*
 - **NOT:** *"How can I get that rifle from X to Y? I know – throw it in!"*
- *"Smart design" is all about writing good stuff the performers will be able to achieve!*

Musicality

- Different captions will use the term differently
 - Ensemble: do the *composition, orchestration and characteristics* fit the music?
 - Effect: do the *repertoire and performance decisions* fit the music?
- In short: *do the programme and the soundtrack fit together?*
- Musicality encompasses design expressivity using the soundtrack
 - This creates **UNITY** and **EFFECT**



All About the Soundtrack

Got the Soundtrack! What Now?

- Listen to it (a lot!)
- Work out its pulse/rhythm/tempo
- Take notes!
- Listen out for events
 - ...or things that could be events?
- Don't get too detailed too quickly!

Step 1: Big Features

- What are the big moments in the soundtrack?
- Where/when does the soundtrack change?
- What does the soundtrack "suggest"?

Step 2: Phrasing and Transition

- How is the soundtrack constructed?
 - Do you need to change it?
- How long are phrases?
- Do any phrases stick out?
 - Rhythmically? Lengthwise?
- Where are the breaths in the music?

Step 3: Voicing and Texture

- What instruments (voicings) are going on at any given time?
- How does the timbre change?
 - Qualitative consideration of the big features
- Are there more subtle musical elements that it would be good to use?
 - Sequences
 - Pickups
 - Runs

Fixing a Soundtrack

- So you have a soundtrack which is really good...
- ...except for one or two unfortunate parts!
- Consider other versions of the same piece of music?
 - Do they get around the problem?
- Otherwise: can you fix the soundtrack?

Fixing a Soundtrack

- Editing a soundtrack takes *time* – more than you will expect!
- Performing a single cut with precise crossfading can be at least several hours work to do well
- Having a well-edited soundtrack is important
 - There is not much worse than a “smash cut” from a design flow point of view...
 - ...unless that’s a deliberate design choice!



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