

## Composition – the decision-making process

Composing music is all about making decisions. Our decisions will be rooted in why we are writing each piece and what we want to say through our music. Some of the decisions we have to make are:

### 1. What is my piece going to be about (if anything)?

Do I want to try to communicate an idea, a place, a feeling, an event, or will it be entirely abstract?

### 2. Title

Once you have decided what you want to write about, give it a title. This will focus your energies in one direction and will remind you what, exactly, you are intending to communicate.

### 3. Instrumentation

What instruments am I going to include in my piece?

### 4. Structure and length

How long will my piece be when it is complete? Will it be in one long section or in two or three or more? Will any of the sections repeat? Will the speed change when I start a new section? How long will the sections be?

### 5. Speed

How fast will the music go?

### 6. Pitch

When you begin writing your piece you will have to make decisions about what pitches you want to use. You could limit your pitches to one scale or a mode, or another collection or series. You could use tonal harmony, or experiment with atonal sounds.

### 7. Key signature

Will my piece be in a certain key or will I use accidentals where appropriate?

### 8. Rhythm

Experiment with rhythms. Again, you will have to make decisions about whether you want to use rhythms which are similar or they could be totally different from one another. Think about layering rhythms.

### 9. Time signature

Does my piece need a time signature? Will the time signature change at some point during the piece?

*Note: Every decision you make should help you communicate your original intention through your music.*