

Constructive Steps Towards Incorporating Video Game Music into Pedagogy

Video game music represents an established canon, a celebrated repertoire, and a perennially-evolving amalgam of genres. This music is one of the most pervasive and celebrated forms of contemporary recorded sonic art, and is experienced during gameplay, live performances, and personal listening. As 98 per cent of Australian homes with children under 18 contain at least one device for playing video games, the salience and relevance of this music for students cannot be ignored.

Nevertheless, there is a shroud of ambiguity surrounding this music for many educators. Teachers whose latest gaming experiences were with 1980s arcade and console games may be unfamiliar with the functions performed by music in contemporary games, while the highly commercialised nature of game music may induce scepticism.

This paper aims to assuage any doubts or misconceptions that teachers may hold when initially incorporating game music into their everyday classroom teaching. To address this aim, foundational aspects such as composition methods, conventional stylistic indicators, in-game functionality, and musical forms are outlined. Audio snippets, video clips, and written notes accompany each significant example to illustrate what is an inextricably digital medium. Incorporating video game music into teaching practice is then approached from the perspective of a classroom music teacher. Planning strategies encompass how to evaluate and choose pieces for a range of lesson and unit types, and how existing teaching material can be adapted. Suggested designs for learning activities include the use of composition software, ensemble rehearsal and performance, and written comprehension tasks, which offer practical solutions for Music teachers with differing resources. Finally, recommended resources and 'first step' options outline how meaningful learning experiences can be achieved using this music, for students and teachers alike.