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P R O J E C T

A guide to the
Global Graphic Score Project

ALEXANDRA
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SCHOOL
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Introduction

What is it?

The Global Graphic Score Project by the School of Noise (in partnership with Alexandra Palace) aims to bring together people from around the world using sound and art. Whatever your age, location or musical or artistic skill level, you are invited to take part in this worldwide experimental sound art collaboration.

We would like to encourage people who have never met to be inspired by each other's artwork to create new sounds and pieces of music. Together we can create a unique collection of beautiful graphic scores and experimental pieces of music.

How does it work?

- Individuals or groups of people design and upload their graphic scores.
- People view the online gallery of graphic scores and select one to download.
- These scores are performed and turned into music and sound art pieces.
- Recordings are made and loaded to our website for other people to listen to.

You can choose to be the composer or the performer. Or maybe try doing both!

What next?

The next few pages will explain what graphic scores are, provide you with ideas on how to make one, and suggest ways you can turn a graphic score into music.

We hope that you have lots of fun creating and performing these graphic scores.

Final notes

This activity can take place anywhere and you don't have to have real musical instruments available. We hope it can help you to be creative, show your artistic talents, share your musical skills and hone your listening skills while experimenting with sound and imagery.

Dan Mayfield

Head of School of Noise

A guide to graphic scores

“One feature of many graphic scores is they can be played by any number of players, of any standard, on any instrument. No two performances sound the same, but all the players will be following the same instructions.”

— classicfm.com

What is a score?

A score is the name we give to music when it is written down. It usually looks similar to this:



This traditional way of writing down music can take a long time to learn, and has sets of rules that musician’s needs to follow. However it isn’t the only way we can write down music.

What is a graphic score?

In the 1950s, composers and musicians began experimenting with different ways of writing music. These became known as **graphic scores** or **graphic notation**.

Graphic scores can look very different to traditional musical scores. They use combinations of images and symbols to tell the performer how to play.

Q. How could you sing or play this drawing?



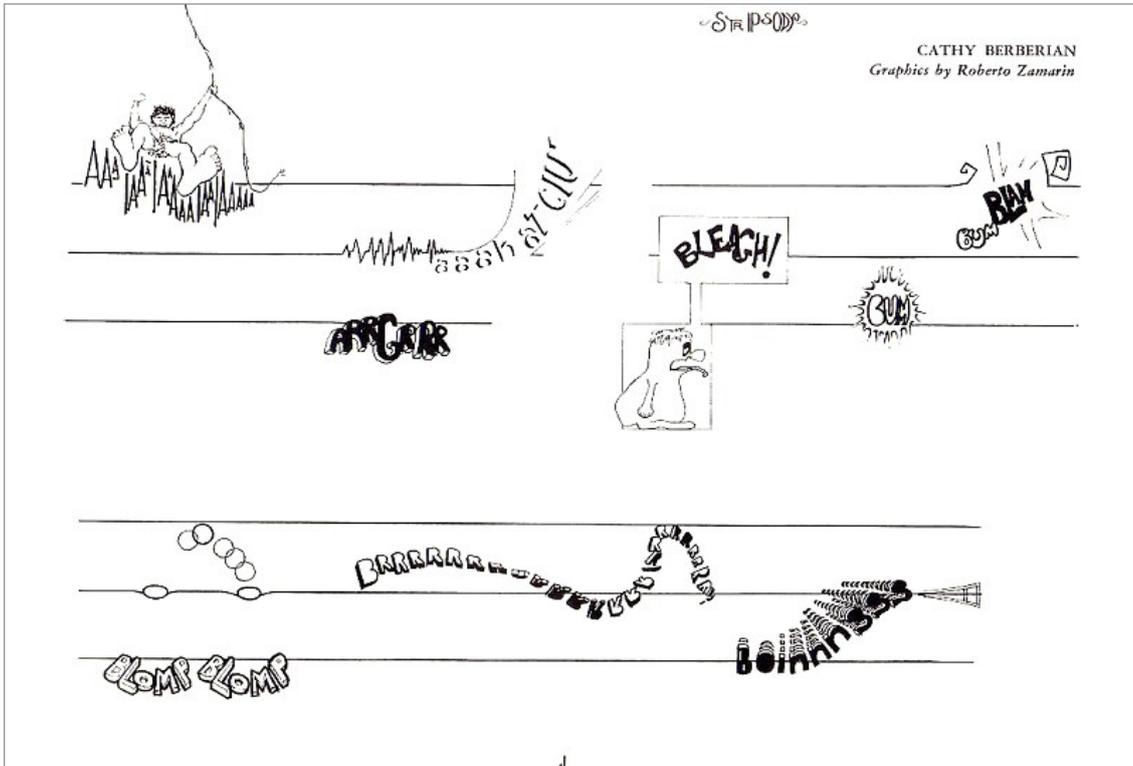
Q. How could you sing or play these dots?



By adding different images together graphic scores can start to look like pieces of art. They can allow the composer to be imaginative and creative.

Examples of graphic scores

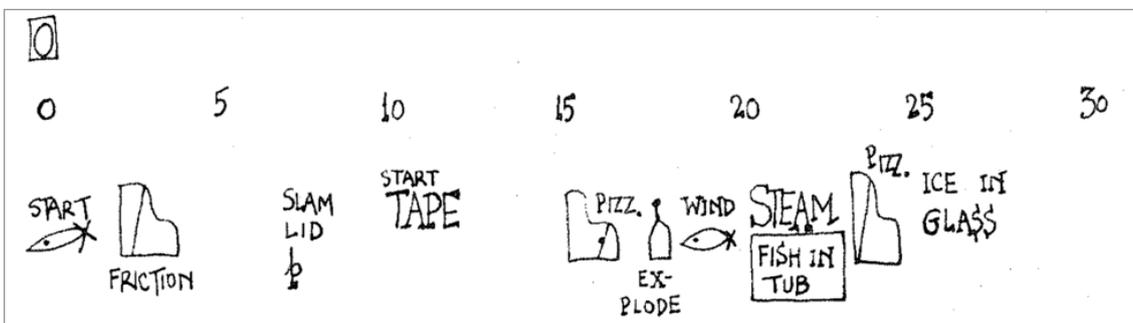
Stripsody by Cathy Berberian (1966)



[Click here to watch a video of Cathy Berberian performing this piece](#)

Q. Can you follow the graphic score along with the sounds?

Waterwalk by John Cage (1959)



[Click here to watch a video of John Cage performing Water Walk](#)

Q. What did you think of it?

Composing a graphic score

Activity 1 – Create a graphic score

Graphic scores can be very artistic and imaginative. They allow the composer to explore different ideas about art, objects and environments, and can include shapes, squiggles, letters and pictures. These patterns can be used to represent different musical directions such as pitch, dynamics, timbre, tempo, texture or even silence.

Step 1: Design and theme

- What will your graphic score look like? Does your graphic score have a theme? How can this inspire your design?
- Traditional musical notation is read from left to right and from top to bottom just like the words on this page. With a graphic score you can make up your own rules. It could go from right to left, bottom to top, or in a circle. The score could tell the performer to play everything all at once, or to stop and be quiet, or turn the page around. You can be as imaginative as you like.

Step 2: Materials

What will you use to make your graphic score? It could be created on paper or cardboard using pens, pencils, paint or sticking things to it, it is up to you. Or you could decide to make it using a computer instead.

Step 3: Instruments and objects

Think about the people who will play your composition. Can they choose the objects to use? Would you like them to find specific items? Not everyone will have the same things available but you could give suggestions on the material to use such as wood, glass, humans etc.

Step 4: Instructions

Does your graphic score have any instructions for the performer? These could be written on the score or on a separate piece of paper. They can tell the performer to do different things such as swap instruments, say a word out loud, flip a coin or roll a dice to make a decision, let your imagination run wild!

Step 5: Complete

- Now it is time to create your graphic score. Once you have finished and added any instructions, think of a name to call it.
- Ask an adult take a photograph, scan, or save the file of the graphic score and upload it to our gallery: schoolofnoise.com/global-graphic-score-project

Performing a graphic score

Activity 2 – Perform a graphic score

Step 1: Discover

- Visit schoolofnoise.com/global-graphic-score-project to look through the gallery of graphic scores people have made.
- Select a graphic score you like the look of, click on the image and select download.

Step 2: View

- Choose how you would like to view the graphic score. You can view the graphic score on your device or by printing it out.
- Take time to carefully study the graphic score. What do you think some of the images and symbols represent? What did the composer have in mind when they wrote it? Discuss your thoughts and ideas with other people.

Step 3: Instruments and objects

What sounds will you need to perform the piece? Your score might have an instruction to use something made of metal. What could you use? A spoon or a tin? A triangle, tap, paper-clip or trumpet? Find things that you have available, are safe and you have permission to use.

Step 4: Rehearse

After you have studied the graphic score and chosen the instruments you want to use you are ready to begin playing the piece. Try to follow any instructions that accompany the score as best you can.

Step 5: Perform

It's time to perform your interpretation of the graphic score! Ask an adult to record the performance.

Step 6: Complete

Once you have finished your recording and are happy with your work it can be emailed to info@schoolofnoise.com

We will upload the recording to accompany the graphic score you chose.

SO LET'S...

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with the

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schoolofnoise.com/global-graphic-score-project

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to **KALEIDOSCOPE FESTIVAL** or **GO-APE** at **ALEXANDRA PALACE**.
Plus free workshops in our **CREATIVITY PAVILION** for School entries.

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