

DJ ANIMATURE PROJECT

Aim:

This Pathfinder project was set up in 2003 by Music teacher, Ray Lau, in order to promote and develop other alternative forms of music. Last academic year, this project brought about huge musical achievements for Swanlea School. A DJ tutor had been brought into school to work with the Year 9 (now Year 10) students. They were preparing for a performance for Showcase 2004. The Showcase event comprised a musical panel, performers with record labels and performances from Swanlea students. Moreover, participating DJ's, vocalists and MC's competed against each to win the opportunity to perform at the Lord Mayor's Respect Festival/SABA UK Unsigned Grand Finals Competition. Swanlea participants were accredited by AQA Unit Award Scheme certificates for their attainments. An article also featured in the Guardian Education Supplement on the theme of the development of Music DJ Courses with valuable contributions made by Swanlea students and Ray Lau.

This academic year (2004 – 2005), the aim was to continue the project by setting up DJ equipments and to teach the essential skills required for mixing one record with another record, keeping two records playing simultaneously, using two sound level techniques and utilising basic scratching techniques.

The students involved this year were:

1. Shaju Ahmed
2. Kauser Ahmed
3. Devris Salih
4. Javed Williams
5. Imran Syed Ali
6. Fozlay Rabby
7. Elias Ali
8. Radouan Qichou
9. Tanver Kaher
10. Shushel Miah

PLAN

For KS3 work:

- Carry out a workshop based on Jazz music. With the anniversary of the Entente Cordiale between France and Britain coming up, the workshop would be based on this celebrative theme.

Part 2 NCFE:

- To complete Unit 1 - Understand dance music production.
Unit 2 - Demonstrating skills in DJ performance.
Unit 3 – Preparing for employment in the DJ industry

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

This year's project was divided into two sections: Part 1 constitutes of practical Key Stage 3/4 work whilst Part 2 is NCFE unit based work.

PART 1 - KS3

In November 2004 the students involved in this project were visited in school by prominent British DJs, Rita Ray and Max Reinhardt and French musicians: Laurent Bardainne and Philippe Gleizes. Together, a workshop was carried out in order to promote communication and team working skills and to widen students' understanding of Jazz music. Thus the students produced some jazz recording with the assistance of the DJs.

The workshop was to mark the anniversary of the Entente Cordial between France and the UK. This was a special agreement signed by the British and France in 1904. The original aim was to reconcile these two countries following disputes over colonial issues. Thus, France and the UK are linked by more than 100 years of shared history and culture. In particular, an alliance was formed during the two World Wars. 2004 was the 100th Anniversary of an agreement that has a wider significance over politics, culture and travel. Hence, British and French DJs came into school to celebrate this anniversary.



Entente Cordiale Workshop

Perhaps the most impressive outcome of this celebrative workshop was that Swanlea School students featured in the East London Advertiser on 11th November 2004 in recognition of their contributions made in the project. The recording students made at the Entente Cordiale Workshop was performed at the London Jazz Festival during November 2004 at South Bank.

PART 2 – NCFE

Part 2 of this project was divided into three units:

- Unit 1 - Understand dance music production.
- Unit 2 - Demonstrating skills in DJ performance.
- Unit 3 – Preparing for employment in the DJ industry

It was in September 2004 that the national awarding body, NCFE, introduced a course in Music Technology allowing students from the age of 14 the opportunity to get accredited for their sampling and sequencing. This course was intended to encourage an understanding of how music business works, examine copyright issues and looks at career opportunities.

UNIT 1 – Understand dance music production

Through the study of this unit, students were introduced to different levels of DJ skills through an exploration of the background, technology and production techniques utilised in modern popular dance and music. Students had the opportunity to investigate and identify some common terms and features used in production. Using the skills and knowledge they gained from this, the participants were ultimately able to produce and a complete dance and music track

UNIT 2 – Demonstrate skills in DJ performance

Having grasped the foundation of dance music production, students then moved on to learn how to demonstrate DJ skills in performances. Initially they had to identify the technology used in the DJ business and to familiarise themselves with how to set up specified pieces of equipment. As a result of this training, students were able to demonstrate and use mixing skills and audio recording software packages and then produce a short demo tape.

UNIT 3 – Prepare for employment in the DJ industry

This unit was designed for students to explore the types of employment available within the music industry and demonstrate an awareness of business practice. Students had to carry out research on this topic. They found the following to be some of the careers available in the music industry:

- DJs producers for radio programme
- DJ for clubs
- DJ for musicals/ theatre
- Music producers
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Students also carried out research on the types of skills and qualification these jobs would require. They discovered that they had already gained some of these skills through participating in this project.

All three modules were taught by specialist DJ tutors, Jowills and Ray Lau. On completion, the students received an AQA NCFE Intermediate Certificate of Music technology and DJ mixing skills.

Enterprise context

The DJ Animature was a dynamic, creative and exciting project and delivered through the enterprise ideals of enthusiasm, passion, imagination and dedication. Students found that DJ Animature developed their confidence, presentation, communication, organisation and leadership skills. Teamwork was another integral part of the project as was liaising with external and prominent people.

Outcomes:

- Students met and worked with famous DJs and successfully carried out the Entente Cordiale Workshop
- Swanlea students featured in the East London Advertiser for all their contribution made during the workshop
- They developed and advanced their DJ skills of mixing one record with another record, keeping two records playing simultaneously whilst utilising two sound level techniques as well as using scratching skills
- All students completed all three Unit based work
- The participants attained a AQA certificate in recognition of all their hard work

Final Evaluation

DJ Animature was a great achievement. Students who study GCSE Music found this enterprise project complemented their learning. They developed many DJ skills as well as acquiring many new ones. For some, learning to set up Dj-ing equipments and mixing one record with another was a new and refreshing experience. Playing two records simultaneously and receiving training in DJ scratching were exciting skills that students thoroughly enjoyed learning.

Many found the Entente Cordiale celebration workshop to be the highlight of the project. They were honoured by the fact that eminent DJs were willing to collaborate with our school and celebrate an historic event between the French and the British. One student commented: “ I really enjoyed meeting Rita, Max, Laurent and the other famous DJs. It was a brilliant day for us all”.