

The Women Who Pioneered Electronic Music – Lesson Plan

Overview

This lesson plan should be used in conjunction with the handout. The questions and talking points below are a recommended starting point for discussion.

Musical Jobs

What different jobs can you think of, to do with making music?

Some examples:

- Singing
- Playing an instrument
- Composing (coming up with the music)
- Writing lyrics
- Producing (working out what else to add to a song to make it sound even better)
- Engineering (using a computer to make the music sound clearer, so it's easier to hear)
- Field recording (finding interesting sounds to use)
- Inventing new instruments

Who Does Them

What kind of people do you think do these jobs?

All different types of people do these jobs. Many of them are just like you. Some people are mostly creative, some are mostly geeky, and some are a balance. Some people even do more than one of these jobs.

What do you think these people look like?

Much like everyone else: all different kinds of people! Many of them look just like you.

It doesn't matter what you look like or where you're from. If you really like music, you can make your own, and help other people to make theirs.

Discussion

The handouts are a starting point for discussion. Here is some additional material to help facilitate that discussion:

- **Daphne Oram** didn't just work in the department that made electronic music at the BBC... she *made* that department, convincing everyone that they needed it in the first place. Most people hadn't heard any electronic music at the time, so her music sounded alien and scary. It was used in the background of a lot of TV shows.
- **Éliane Radigue** had one synthesiser and a tape player to record sound with, and experimented a lot with them. Her music was slow and calm, the opposite of most other people's music.
- Although **Delia Derbyshire** didn't compose the Dr. Who theme tune, she made and performed all its sounds. She took a good tune and turned it into something scary, exciting, and still loved to this day. And she didn't even use a synthesiser to do it! This was in 1963, before you could buy synthesisers. Instead, she used something called a "wobulator", designed to fix radios, along with a noise generator that made a hissing sound, and some tape recorders.
- While Delia Derbyshire was introducing Brits to electronic music, **Wendy Carlos** was doing the same thing in America. She was friends with Bob Moog (whose name rhymes with "vogue"), who made one of the very first synthesisers actually designed as a musical instrument. She made several albums of classical music she performed on her Moog, and made soundtracks for some of Stanley Kubrick's films. Her friend Rachel Elkind produced her music.
- The Voyager spacecraft is drifting through outer space very fast. It has a special record on it, introducing us. If aliens ever find it, **Laurie Spiegel**'s music will be one of the first things from Earth they hear.
- **Suzanne Ciani** doesn't just use synthesisers to make music. She also uses them to make sound effects. In the 1970s, a lot of big companies paid her to make sounds for their logos in adverts.
- **Doris Norton** wrote and performed electronic music in the 80s and 90s, and worked with both Apple and their rival at the time, IBM, when both were best known for their home computers.
- **Björk** doesn't just sing, she makes the entire music. She writes the lyrics, composes the music, sings the songs, plays the synthesisers, and produces the albums. She makes songs in lots of different electronic styles, and has won over a hundred awards.
- Like Björk, **Imogen Heap** also does everything. Her albums are fun to listen to, and she also has fun making them. She was the first person to make a song using hi-tech gloves, and made another song by looping lots of recordings of her voice on top of each other. She's influenced Ariana Grande and Katy Perry, and helped Taylor Swift write Clean.