The Ultimate Free Music Technology Resources Guide 2012

by Katie Wardrobe

midnight music .com.au

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About this guide

As a music technology software trainer, I'm always on the lookout for quality free and low-cost resources for teachers, students and other musicians.

In 2009, I ran my first *Music Technology On A Shoestring* workshop at a conference in Melbourne, Australia, where I presented a number of the resources on these pages. Over time, the list of resources has more than tripled and I decided that it was time to make a guide which I could share easily and update on an annual basis.

Don't miss out on monthly tips, articles and news!

If you received this guide from a friend you can sign up to the Midnight Music email list here.

Please note that while *most* of the resources mentioned in this guide are completely free to use, some of them have paid optional upgrades.

About Katie

Katie Wardrobe is a qualified teacher who enjoys helping people of all skill levels get the most out of music software programs. She runs her own business – **Midnight Music (www.midnightmusic.com.au)** – which specialises in training classroom teachers, instrumental music teachers and students. She also regularly runs sessions for composers, songwriters and arrangers. Katie's sessions are relaxed, informative and relevant.

Katie has worked in a variety of music and education-related workplaces, including Sibelius Australia and Orchestra Victoria. In 2011 she was the Project Manager of the Soundhouse Alliance's *Music Technology in Education Conference* and she has presented at more than 20 other conferences and events.

Katie has worked as a freelance copyist, music arranger and transcriber for more than 20 years and is an Executive member of the Music Arrangers Guild of Australia. She also sings in (and directs) a 5-voice a cappella group called *Quintessential*. In 2010 Katie set up a tutorials and tips website to support users of MuseScore – free open-source notation software (www.musescoretips.com) – and in 2011 she released an ebook titled *MuseScore: The Essential Beginner's Guide*.

Professional development & training

In-person training

Katie runs music technology training sessions at schools, network meetings, conferences and professional learning events in Australia (and beyond!). Courses focus on the application of technology in education, in addition to the nuts and bolts, "how-to" aspects of software. Training is offered for Sibelius, Acid, Audacity, GarageBand, MuseScore, Interactive whiteboards, iPads, film scoring, podcasting, remixing, teaching composition with notation and more.

You can find more information about professional development workshops here: www.midnightmusic.com.au/pd

Online courses

Starting in 2012, Katie will be offering a range of online courses in Sibelius, Audacity, GarageBand, Acid, Mixcraft, interactive whiteboards, iPads and more. Courses are scheduled to take place after-hours and consist of multiple sessions. To find out more, visit:

www.midnightmusic.com.au/online

Ear-training and music theory

The Music Interactive

Link: http://themusicinteractive.com/

The Music Interactive site has a range of fantastic downloadable games suitable for primary and middle school students (older students may enjoy them too). You'll need to sign up to their forum in order to get access to the download links.

Some of their many games (more on the website):

- Staff Wars 1 (identify notes on the staff)
- Staff Wars 2 (identify notes by playing your instrument)
- Jama Mambo (rhythm dictation for young students)
- Rhythm dictation (older students)
- Drawn to Keys (intervals and scales)

Tips and More

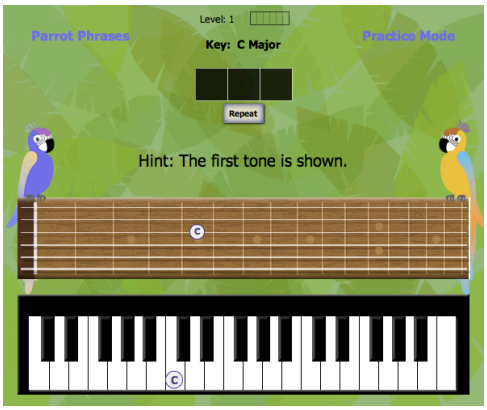
- Works really well as a warm-up activity
- Suitable to play in teams or as individual players
- Students can download for free and play at home
- Scores are not tracked in these programs, but you could ask students to take a screenshot (also known as a screencapture image) to "record" their score

Theta Music Trainer

Link: http://midnightmusic.com.au/theta

Some good quality, innovative games available on this site. Most of the lower levels of each game are free and you can pay a subscription to access higher levels. The site also keeps track of your progress and suggests areas for improvement!

- Parrot Phrases (melodic dictation)
- Dango Brothers (tuning)
- Chord Spells (spelling chords)
- Chord Locks (type, position, number)
- Channel Scramble
- Speed Pitch (higher/lower/same)
- Plus more!



Smartboardmusic

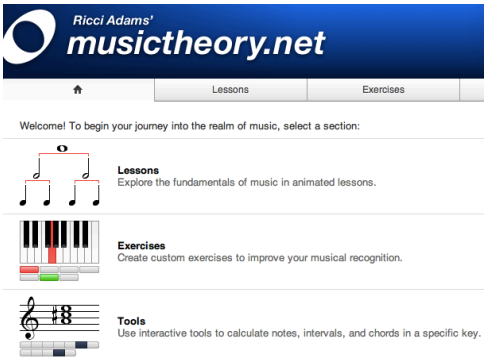
Link: http://smartboardmusic.org/

- Ear-training games designed for use on an IWB but works with a regular data projector too
- Ducks to Water
- Robinator
- Indians and Canoes
- Many more to try!

Musictheory.net

Link: http://www.musictheory.net/

- Free online theory information
- Clear, step-by-step lessons
- Includes interactive exercises



Teoria

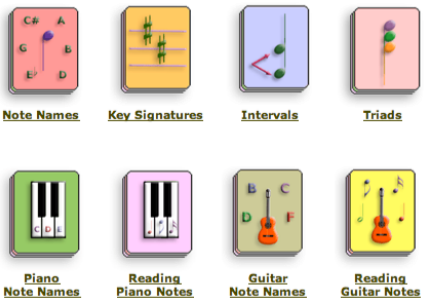
Link:

- Theory tutorials, exercises, reference and articles
- Good control over settings for ear-training exercises
- Includes analysis section: works by Bach, Chopin, Debussy and Schumann

Musicards: online music theory flashcards

Link: http://www.musicards.net/

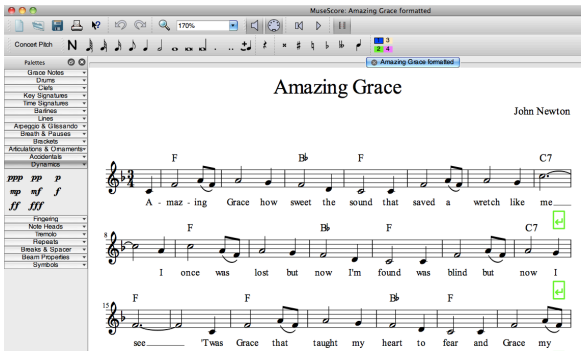
- Flashcards for note names, key signatures, intervals, triads and more
- Roll your mouse over the card to reveal the answer
- Generate new questions with a click



Notation

MuseScore

Link: http://musescore.org/



About MuseScore:

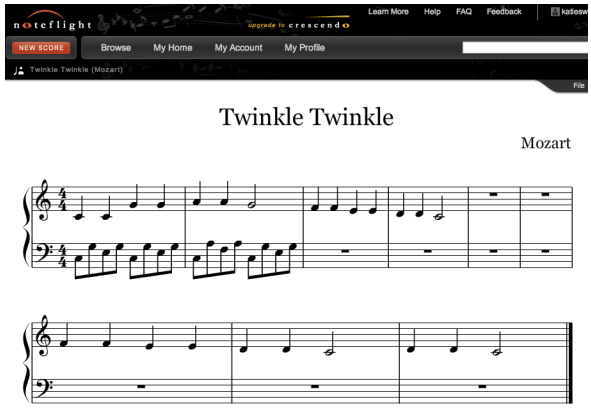
- Download to your computer (PC, Mac, Linux)
- Easy to use
- Unlimited staves, key changes, time signature changes, lyric verses, instrumental parts
- Works in a similar way to Sibelius
- Notes entry via computer keyboard or MIDI keyboard (step-time entry only)
- Online score-sharing (can make private for students)

Other links:

- Score sharing site: http://musescore.com/
- Tips and tutorials (and a free shortcuts list!): http://www.musescoretips.com/
- Youtube videos: http://www.youtube.com/user/MuseScoreHowTo
- Comparison between MuseScore and Finale Notepad: http://www.musescore.org/en/node/111

Noteflight

Link: http://www.noteflight.com/



About Noteflight:

- Use online – no need to download, need internet connection
- Students collaboration possible due to online nature
- Easy to use
- Best for young students and beginners
- Limited staves
- Excellent set of resources for educators

Other links:

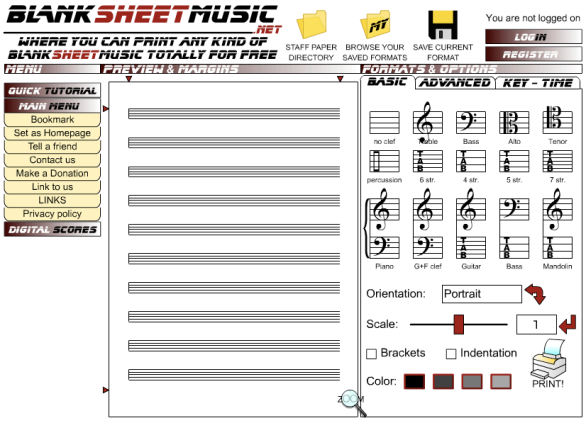
- Noteflight learning activities: http://activities.noteflight.com/
- Youtube videos: http://www.youtube.com/user/jberkovitz

Blank Sheet Music

Link: http://www.blanksheetmusic.net/

Create your own custom-designed blank manuscript paper:

- Print the paper as is, keeping the default settings
- Click on the **Advanced** tab and choose a different "scale" to increase or decrease the space between the stave lines. Hint: the largest size (2) is a useful for young students to write on
- Customise the manuscript further if you wish, by adding clefs, key signatures and time signatures and grouping staves together
- You can even keep your customised manuscript settings by creating a user name and saving your favourite set-ups in a folder



Recording and sequencing

Audacity

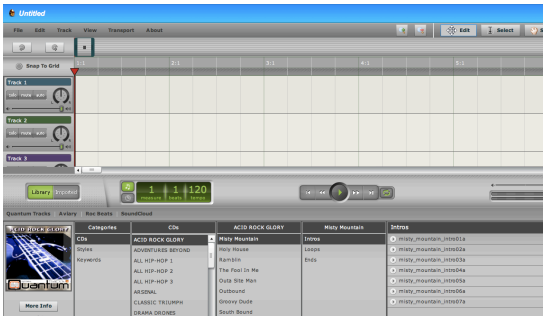
Link: http://audacity.sourceforge.net/

- Excellent for basic editing
- Transpose a song, remove vocals, change tempo, chop up musical examples, add fade-ins and fade-outs
- Podcasting, digital storytelling, record students
- Info about my online course *Amazing Audacity*: http://www.midnightmusic.com.au/amazing-audacity-online-course/

Myna

Link: http://www.aviary.com/online/audio-editor

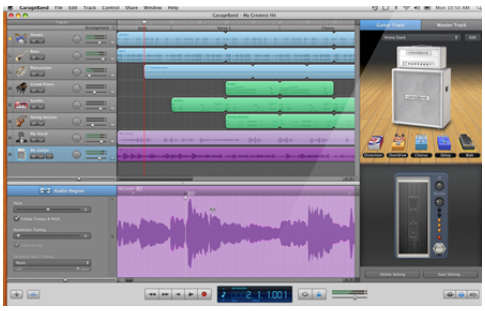
- Free online application
- Record yourself
- Work with loops



GarageBand

Link: http://www.apple.com/ilife/garageband/

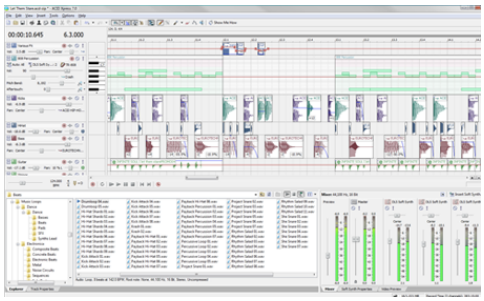
- Mac only (free with your new Mac)
- Download from the Mac App Store



Acid Xpress

Acid Xpress (free):
http://www.acidplanet.com/downloads/xpress/

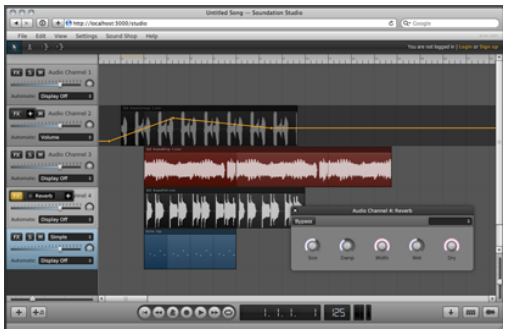
- PC only
- Easy to use; good for looping, film composition
- Full version (Acid Music Studio) worth buying for the included loops



Soundation

Link: http://soundation.com/

- Online digital audio workstation
- Includes virtual instruments, effects and over 400 loops

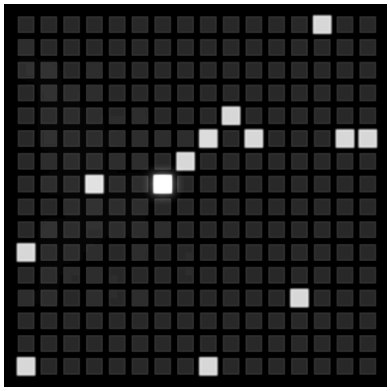


Creating loops and patterns

Tone Matrix

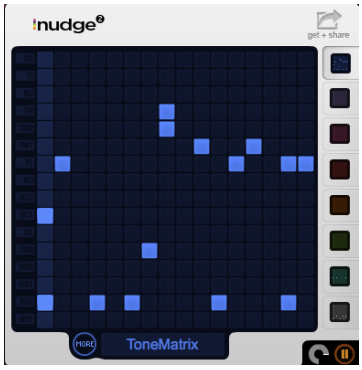
Link: http://lab.andre-michelle.com/tonematrix

- Interactive website
- Simple, pentatonic-based melodic tool



iNudge

Link: http://inudge.net/



- Interactive website
- Pentatonic-based melodic tool
- Multiple “layers” and instrument sounds
- Can share creations via email

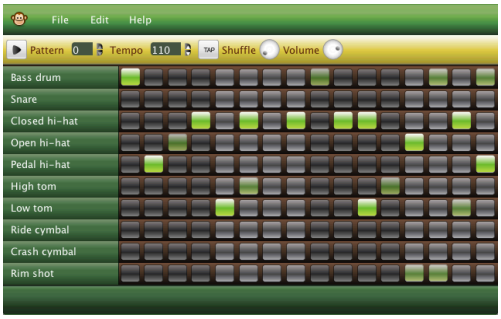
Roc

Link: http://www.aviary.com/online/music-creator

- Interactive website, simple to use grid
- Easily create original loops from scratch
- Excellent introduction to composition
- Excellent range of sound-sets
- Can download creations in WAVE or MP3 formats in order to use them with other applications (such as GarageBand, Acid Xpress or Mixcraft)

Monkey Machine

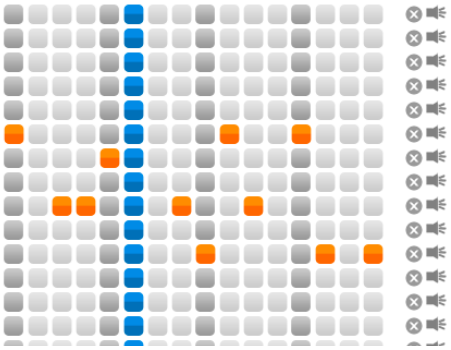
Link: http://rinki.net/pekka/monkey/monkey.php



- Create drum loops up to 32 beats in length
- Variety of drum kits to choose from
- Can export pattern as a MIDI file

Beatlab

Link: http://www.beatlab.com/



- Create drum loops with a variety of sounds
- Simple grid

Audiotool

Link: http://www.audiotool.com/

- Create pattern-based music using hardware emulators
- Includes drum machines, synths, effects units and more
- Drag elements into place. Useful for teaching signal flow

Remixing, arranging and composing

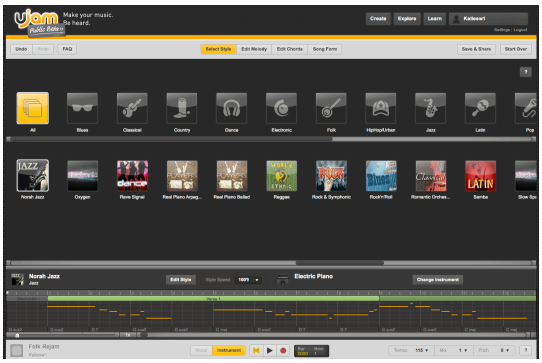
Isle of Tune

Link: http://isleoftune.com/ (wait for the game to load…)

- "Build" a musical city using trees, houses and other items that all make different rhythms and melodies
- Drive a car along the musical street to play your creation
- Also available as an iPad app (iPhone and iPod Touch coming soon)

Ujam

Link: http://www.ujam.com



- Put together a song using preset styles
- Can upload audio tracks or record your voice
- Change chord sequences and write a melody
- Useful tool for middle school remixing projects

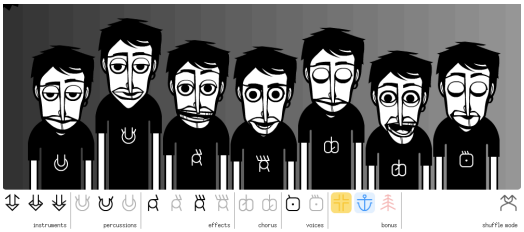
Creating Music

Link: http://www.creatingmusic.com/

- Children's composition tools and games
- Musical sketch pad is an excellent way to introduce/discuss graphic notation: makes use of compositional techniques such as inversion, retrograde, augmentation and diminution
- Includes simple compositional games

Incredibox

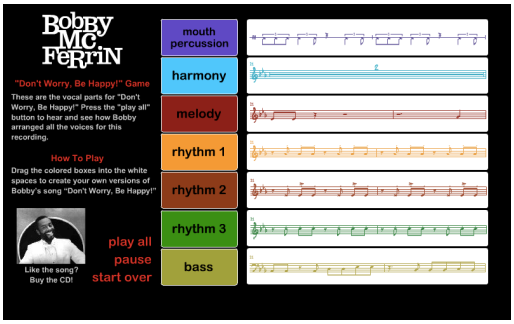
Link: http://www.incredibox.fr/



- Simple, interactive website (“novelty”!)
- Good introduction to beat-boxing, a cappella singing and arranging

Don’t Worry Be Happy game

Link: http://bobbymcferrin.com/don’t-worry-be-happy-song/



- Interactive website
- Allows you to break down Bobby McFerrin’s arrangement – listen to parts separately or together

Melody Street

Link: http://melodystreet.com/INDEX/live/

- Games for elementary students
- Includes High/Low, Who’s That Instrument, Musical Memory, Simon Bells and more

MmmTsss looping app ☺

Link: http://web.mit.edu/~eric_r/Public/mmmtsss/

Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xR7JKw4j4A&

- Download for free
- Click with your mouse to record a loop
- Continue to build loops
- Great for improvisation

Music Tech Teacher

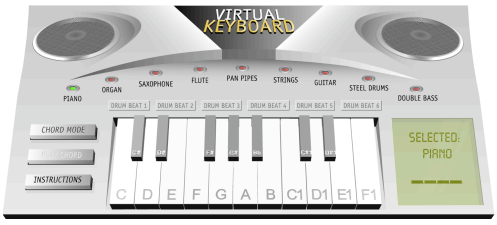
Link: http://www.musictechteacher.com/musicquizzes.htm

- More than 130 music games and quizzes created by music teacher Karen Garrett
- Includes interactive and printable games/quizzes

Virtual Instruments

Virtual piano

Link: http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources_ftp/client_ftp/ks2/music/piano/



Virtual drumkit

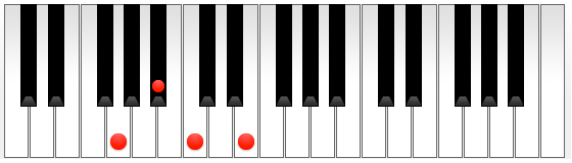
Link: http://www.kenbrashear.com/

- Download for free

Musictheory.net piano

Link: http://www.musictheory.net/piano

- Play notes when in Play mode
- Add red dots to notes when in Mark mode



The Orchestra, Composers and More

Dallas Symphony Orchestra Kids

Link: http://www.dsokids.com/

- Listen and Learn section contains simplified composer biographies and instrument listening guide
- Games section includes 4 music games for students

New York Phil Kids

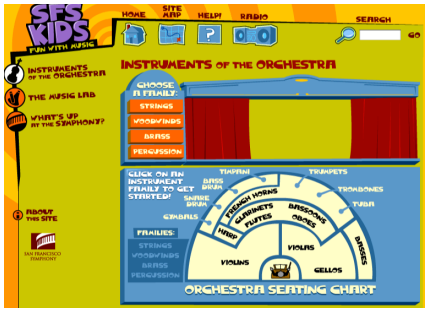
Link: http://www.nyphilkids.org/

- Variety of bright, colourful games for students
- Website also includes instrument and composer information

San Francisco Symphony Kids

Link: http://www.sfskids.org/templates/home.asp?pageid=1

- Instruments of the orchestra and music lab sections



Hansel and Gretel

Link: http://creativekidseducationfoundation.org/html/handg.php

- Interactive visual story with music
- Also have Scheherazade & Brahms projects

Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra

Link: http://listeningadventures.carnegiehall.org/ypgto/index.aspx

- Online game for students
- Register/login to save game progress

Dvorak Symphony No.9 (New World)

Link: http://listeningadventures.carnegiehall.org/nws/splash.html

- Listening guide with images and sound
- Includes suggested activities
- Tip: if the website area is small, you can zoom in to make it clearer

Classics For Kids

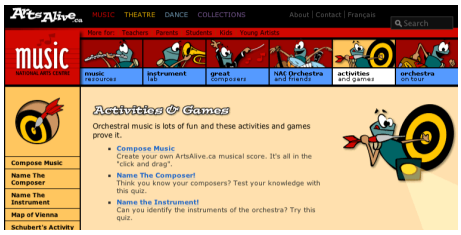
Link: http://www.classicsforkids.com/

- Musical dictionary
- Free lesson plans
- Games

Arts Alive – Instrument Lab

Link: http://artsalive.ca/en/mus/instrumentlab/

- Learn about sections of the orchestra and listen to each instrument
- Also worth a look is their Great Composers page (http://artsalive.ca/en/mus/greatcomposers/)



Steven Estrella's Incredibly Abridged Dictionary of Composers

Link:
http://www.stevenestrella.com/composers/index.html?styletimeline.html

- Very useful Western Classical music timeline and composer biographies

Music Tools

Online metronome

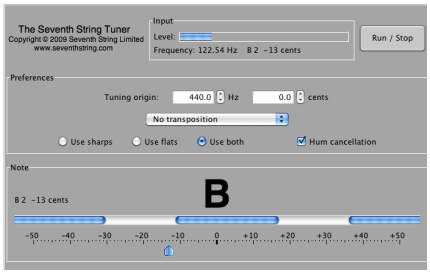
Link:
http://www.seventhstring.com/metronome/metronome.html

- Choose a tempo from the list or drop-down menu
- You can also "tap the foot" to determine a tempo

Online tuner

Link: http://www.seventhstring.com/tuner/tuner.html

- Use the tuner by playing or singing into your computer's internal microphone
- Play a chosen tone



Non Music-Specific Tools

Voicethread

Link: http://voicethread.com/

- Create collaborative, multimedia slideshows
- Upload, share and comment on videos, images and documents
- Leave comments via text, video or audio
- Examples of use in education: http://voicethread.com/about/library/

Animoto

Link: http://animoto.com/

- Simple-to-use video maker
- Upload images and audio
- Slide show (with transitions) is created automatically

Jing

Link: http://www.techsmith.com/jing.html

- Capture an image of anything on your screen
- Mark-up images (arrows, circles, text)
- Create a video of you doing something on your computer
- Use to make your own tutorial documents and video
- Students can use to capture learning or teach each other

Triptico

Link: http://www.triptico.co.uk/

- 23 adaptable interactive resources in one download
- Designed for interactive whiteboards, but can be used with a data projector
- Create your own word magnets, Jeporday-style quizzes, matching games
- More uses: choose students randomly from a list, track team scores for games, timer

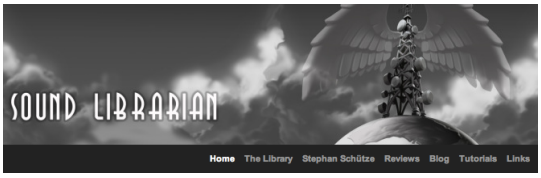
Content: Images, Sound Effects, Videos

Here are my top places for finding excellent free content (images, music, sound effects and videos).

Sounds effects: The Sound Librarian:

Link: http://www.stephanschutze.com/

- Sound effects recorded on location
- Download the Sound Librarian tool to your computer and access sound effects whenever you have an internet connection



Videos: The Moving Image Archive

Link: http://www.archive.org/details/movies

- Creative Commons and public domain videos
- Wide variety of styles and lengths

INTERNET ARCHIVE
MOVIE ARCHIVE

Royalty-free music: Incompetech

Link: http://incompetech.com/m/c/royalty-free/

- Highly recommended!
- Composer Kevin McLeod shares his music under a Creative Commons license
- Can search by music style or "feel"
- Excellent for film scoring projects, GarageBand, Acid or Mixcraft, jingles, intro/outro music

incompetech

Images: Clip Art by Phillip Martin

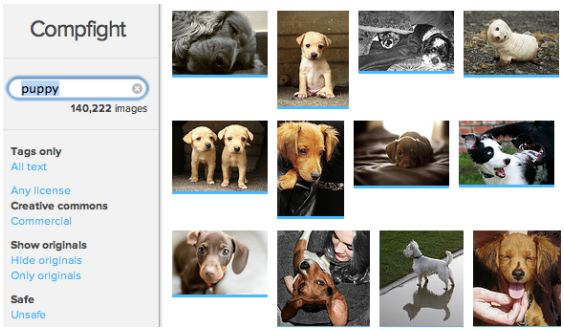
Link: http://www.phillipmartin.info/clipart/homepage.htm

- Gorgeous array of cartoon images for use by schools
- Images cover all subject areas
- Includes Peter and the Wolf picture, instruments of the orchestra and other

Images: Creative Commons Photographs

Link: www.compfight.com

- Visit the website and type in a search term
- Select the Creative Commons setting on the left of the screen to search for photos that are legal to use (with attribution to the creator)



More links

There are more links on the **Mulitmedia Resources** page on my website:

Link: http://www.midnightmusic.com.au/multimedia-resources/

Tutorial videos, how-to articles, support and networking

Youtube

Link: http://www.youtube.com/

- Hundreds (thousands?) of tutorials for music software and hardware
- Great source of live performances

Music PLN site

Link: http://musicpln.org/

- Connect with music teachers around the world
- In-depth conversations about lessons, resources, experiences, equipment, software

Twitter (yes, Twitter)

Link: https://twitter.com/

- Best form of music education networking I've done
- Help from other teachers 24/7
- Great way to connect with others in your niche

Music Education Blogs

Link: http://musicednews.com/

- Huge number of links to music education blogs
- Blogs = online magazine, online newspaper or online journal
- Read about lesson plans, see samples of student work, learn how to use software, hear about conferences and much more

Contact me

Contact me regarding

- training enquiries
- presentations for your school/network/event
- online music technology courses
- music technology-related questions

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