

SHAKE FEST STUDIO



Choosing the focus for your music piece

What to consider and questions to ask

Please note: The content here should be considered a guide only and is not designed to box you in – only to get you thinking. At the end of the day we want you to stay creative and go with your gut instincts!

Shakespeare wrote at least 37 plays, so how can you choose between them when picking the focus for your Shake Fest entry? Use this worksheet the help you find a choice you are passionate about!

What are your strengths?

No matter which category you are participating in, it's important to play to your strengths. So write them here! What instruments (if any) can you play? What style of music are you best at performing? What do you enjoy the most? Whatever it is, find a play that allows you to use what you've got as well as discover new talents.

What themes and issues resonate with you?

One awesome thing about Shakespeare is that he wrote about the human condition – that's one of the reasons why he is still celebrated today. Write a list of the things that resonate with you in your life today, so you can see if anything matches up to an existing storyline or theme in a Shakespeare Play, or the experience of one of the characters. When on your search, don't forget to strip back the fancy names and kingdoms so you can focus on the relationships and problems between the characters.

Examples: Unbridled ambition? Head to Macbeth. Friendship betrayal? Julius Caesar could be for you. Dealing with a love triangle? Check out loads of Shakespearean comedies like Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Nights Dream.

What are the key moments in the play that could be expressed through music, or what are the moments in the play that you could write an underscore for?

For music pieces inspired by the play:

How much of the story can you tell with the instruments you have and the time you have been given? What are the most interesting plot points for your audience? You have the flexibility to tackle an interpretation of the entire plot, a single character's experience in the play, just one moment between two characters, or a single character's experience over one scene in the play. Covering more plot points doesn't always make a better music piece, just focus on the adjudication criteria in the welcome pack.

Think of a few song options for the play(s) you have chosen to look at and write them here.

For musical pieces designed to underscore an interpretation:

What are the most intriguing parts of the play and the journey the audience goes on, and how can you take the audience on that journey with your music? Pick some scenes and write down concepts for underscores you could write before choosing between them.
