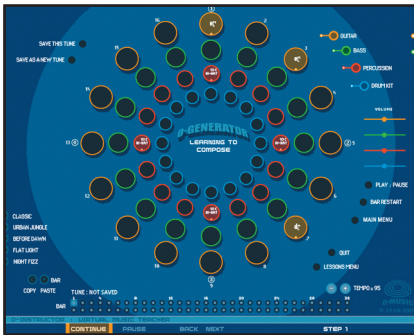


ZONE MAGAZINE - LEARN TO COMPOSE

Product: O-Generator – Learning to Compose
What: Music Software package for Key Stages 2/3
Price: £69 (Unlimited Site Licence: Primary £299;
Secondary £599)

‘You say you want a revolution, oh well, you know we all want to change the world....’ or so the song goes. Well, revolutions are what you get with O-Generator!

This is a great piece of software that caught my attention from the first image and sound demonstration. The fact that I could use it almost straight away was a bonus!



I’m so used to viewing musical data running from right to left across the screen in a linear motion that, on viewing the simplicity of the revolutions in front of me, I cried. Joking apart

(honest, I didn’t really cry) the screen looks great and once the beat begins, and the revolutions revolve you just get sucked into the vortex.

The on-screen controls are set out clearly and, after watching the introductory video, present no problems to manipulate. (I did start to describe the visual image in words but gave up; pictures speak louder.) O-Generator incorporates contemporary styles of popular music and so will appeal to most of the children who follow the trends of today. The samples used are convincing and will help to enhance creativity; I had great fun with the vocal samples.

O-Generator comes with a set of 9 lessons covering the topics of 1. rhythm, 2. melody, harmony & arranging, 3. guitars – hooks & riffs and 4. song writing. These lessons are an informative way of learning about the software and developing musical knowledge.

With the O-Generator comes the O-Instructor, a virtual teacher!! This guide helps the children through the lessons in a calm and precise manner that is both interesting to listen to as well as being cool and trendy. If nothing else, you must get hold of a copy and listen to the O-Instructor create his football rap – it documents the creative potential of the software in a great way. (I like the way this has been recorded, you can hear the instructor clicking on the mouse and turning pages; he’s there with you! – ‘Rock ‘N’ Roll’.)

Away from the lessons and clear guidance, the children are able to create their own tunes, which can be saved and reloaded next lesson. Selection of accompaniment type and instrument allows for a multiple of styles open to the prowess of the user.

Working within primary, I would happily use O-Generator with Y5/6 children. I can see this programme having great potential in KS3 and would be most useful as a transition tool.

I don’t really have negative things to say apart from the lessons notes and plans seem a little regimented but I’m sure most teachers would see these as a guide only. Having just spent the last 5 weeks fighting with temperamental portable laptops; O-Generator, with the O-Instructor, has restored my faith in the usefulness and fun of ICT.

John Oates, AST, Warrington LEA