

MUSIC TEACHER MAGAZINE - WORLD MUSIC

Technology review

O-Generator World Music

Sibelius, £175.08 (5-user licence)



The National Curriculum stipulates learning and playing world music through the interrelated skills of performing, composing and appraising; this product provides information on and opportunities for playing African and Latin-American music. The program is suitable for both Windows or Apple Macs. Students can quickly build up their own music with the wide range of instruments available and their compositions may be saved as a song file or exported as traditional notation or audio files.

A series of video lessons works in conjunction with the O-Generator lessons to explain and illustrate wider aspects of African and Latin-American music styles. The whole system is best suited to use in a computer lab where students may work individually or in pairs, and it is ideal (although not essential) if a projector and screen is used together with good quality speakers for maximum impact. Lessons include African and Latin drumming, African

voices, soukous, 2/3 clave rhythms – Latin clave, samba, African chords and salsa. There are also warm-up and practical lessons in which the whole class uses percussion instruments guided by the video tutorials. Students can also use the O-instructor on-screen ‘virtual teacher’ to guide them through each lesson, which provides clear explanations on how to build up the music in each style being explored. Composing work may be quickly saved and re-loaded for further work.

Setting up *O-Generator World Music* is very straightforward, and the lessons and videos are attractively presented. African and Latin rhythms have natural appeal and the vibrant range of sounds available enables pupils to produce exciting compositions. There are clear tutorials on using world music instruments which can be assessed at the end of each lesson in the form of a quiz. I made up some trial compositions using the program and found it to be both user-friendly and fun to operate. You select your chosen instruments in ‘Create’ mode and, with the O-Generator in motion, add individual parts such as percussion

reviewed by **Tony Cliff**

instruments, bass lines, vocal parts, and guitar riffs. The O-Generator plays back your music instantly and you can refine and adjust until you are happy with the result. Since each revolution of the O-Generator represents one bar of music and it is possible to record up to 64 individual bars, pieces lasting up to three-and-a-half minutes are possible. Once you have finished a bar of music you can easily cut and paste it elsewhere in the piece. All the techniques needed are clearly explained throughout and the resulting music files sounded very professional.

I am pleased to recommend Sibelius *O-Generator World Music* as a most attractive product which is bound to generate great enthusiasm among students. It helps to demystify key aspects of world music styles in a most user-friendly manner and is ideal for secondary pupils up to GCSE level.

Tony Cliff is a composer and arranger, recently moved to Cornwall. He has the new BMus jazz degree at Truro College. He taught for many years at University of Salford