



*YouTube lets you watch women throwing cats into dustbins and three-year-olds conducting Beethoven, but it's also worth its weight in gold as a teaching resource. And, as **Anthony Anderson** explains, you ignore it at your peril*

Does anyone know *anywhere* where I can find the Martin Luther King “I have a dream” speech?’ I can still remember my music teacher staring at us hopefully, desperately trying to source this historic moment for a music and drama evening. Looking back it seems unimaginable that such information was so hard to find: today it would simply be a case of tapping the phrase into a search engine. In the same way, it is hard to imagine the music classroom without the wealth of video and audio material that YouTube offers. In the five years that it has been around this incredible video environment has revolutionised the way that music is shared and experienced, and it can open a portal to music-making experiences from across the world. An exciting prospect!

CHILD PROTECTION

YouTube has a vast array of content and not all of it is suitable for the classroom, so it is vital that you use it carefully and appropriately. Never leave students to explore the site unmonitored, even for a moment. Always check any video you plan to use in front of a class first. We must take seriously the safeguarding of the young people in our care, so these are sensible and vitally important precautions.

If good policies are in place, then YouTube is definitely worth fighting for. If your school blocks this site, see if you can negotiate with your senior leadership team to allow its careful use. It can offer so much to enrich good teaching and it could be argued that it presents no greater risk than other external sources such as internet access, especially if it is properly managed.

Thinking about how to get the best out of YouTube and to deal with some of the issues surrounding its use is now an essential task for every music teacher. If you've not used it before, I hope at the very least to arouse your curiosity, and tempt you to explore the site and to consider its potential.

Using YouTube from the front of the classroom as an integrated video resource is one of the easiest ways to use the site. The images which accompany a piece of music can help to focus students so that they really listen and think about that sound coming from the speakers. Despite a bit of a rocky patch when music videos disappeared from YouTube in this country, they are back thanks to a deal agreed with the Performing Rights Society in 2009. This presents teachers with a goldmine of material. What better way can there be when teaching folk music to show some original performances by Bob Dylan? All kinds of music, from Jeff Buckley's *Grace* to classical, jazz and numerous other traditions, are unlocked in a different way as images and music work together.

YouTube can also be a great way for students to watch young people performing the music you want to introduce them to. This always has a positive impact on student engagement and helps students to contextualise their learning. Seeing peers performing Cage's *Once Upon a Time* from Living Room Music, or one of the numerous versions of Reich's *Clapping Music*, has a palpable impact and, I have found, makes my own students want to do it too! But be careful what you choose to showcase in this way. I recently heard of an accomplished woodwind teacher showing his students a YouTube video of clarinet-playing instead of just playing the instrument himself! The site makes a good servant, but a bad master.

There is plenty of potential for other uses too, such as interviews with musicians and composers. Recently I arranged my classroom in a jazz café style and addressed the students as though they were visitors to an evening jazz gig. Julian Joseph was unable to be with us, but we had a live video link... Remember that video does not have to be used in a stilted, static manner, but can be just as creative as your own style of lesson planning. How about using YouTube as a



virtual teacher for a section of the lesson? Jools Holland has visited my classroom to get my students started in boogie-woogie piano-playing and there have been many times when drumming, guitar and even sitar techniques have been an aspect of a lesson along with their virtual instructors. It can take a bit of searching to find the best examples to use with students and it is worth bearing this in mind. The site is not a substitute for thorough and well-considered lesson planning and should not be an excuse for pedagogical laziness!


Comedy can be another rich dimension and some of my favourite videos make a clear point in this manner. Dudley Moore in his Beethoven pastiche with its perpetual perfect cadences, and Igudesman and Joo's 'Big hands' are two wonderful ways to make a musical point. The students will laugh *and remember*.

Spin-offs

YouTube can help to strengthen teaching practice in ways that are not always anticipated. In the music department at my school, we often use YouTube among the teaching staff to share ideas and spark creativity. The discussions that result, about music and how to teach it better, can all constitute effective and well-tailored CPD, and have a real impact on classroom teaching. Listening to laptop computer orchestras, discussing the conducting technique of André Previn and considering just how it is possible for Wynton Marsalis to get that impossibly high trumpet note are all examples of this. They have enlivened discussion, classroom practice and our thinking and approach as musicians. To be honest, it is quite hard to think of a day when we have not shared something with each other in this way; it has simply become a part of what we do and the department is stronger because of it.

Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir singing Lux Aurumque is another incredible YouTube experience which demonstrates what is possible. There is something vaguely unnerving and yet totally enthralling about listening to and watching this video. Could it be that there are students in your classes who have participated in this project – recording their own part and then sending it to be part of the virtual choir?

There's a thought to end with: are any of your students

performing their music on YouTube and do you know about it? The quietest student who sits in the corner and you consider average, may not be. They may never tell *you* about the music they make and record in their bedroom, but they may tell the world on YouTube. One of my students, Sam Biggs, has produced some great multi-tracked video and preview material, some with around 17,000 views. It is easy to forget this in class when we are discussing how to improve harmony work or to prepare for an essay. I might miss this fantastic music-making without his YouTube channel and, as his music teacher, that would be tragic. Have you got a student like this in your school? Time to get online and check. 

Anthony Anderson is the head of music and an advanced skills teacher at Beauchamp College, Leicestershire, and a member of the steering group for the Teaching Music website.

» YOUTUBE TOP 10 PLAYLIST

We've compiled the following videos in a playlist – go to youtube.com/user/musicteachermag

1. **Bobby McFerrin: Drive My Car**
2. **Bobby McFerrin: Ave Maria**
(It's hard to know where to start with Bobby McFerrin, but here are a couple of my favourites.)
3. **Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir: Lux Aurumque**
(Solo singers brought together – unimaginable without YouTube.)
4. **Dudley Moore: Beethoven sonata parody**
(This is great for provoking discussion in an A-level group.)
5. **Igudesman and Joo: Big hands**
(Good for introducing piano music and how such a big sound is created.)
6. **Jools Holland: piano lesson**
(Great for a simple but fun pattern which will get students playing.)
7. **Sam Biggs: For the First Time**
8. **Sam Biggs: California Gurls**
(One of my students on YouTube.)
9. **Mystery Guitar Man: Root Beer Mozart**
(A new way into Mozart?)
10. **Grease: Summer Nights karaoke**
(Yet another use for YouTube...)