

L1: I can create a graphic score for an
orchestral piece of music

Delia Derbyshire Doctor Who Theme

(original theme composed by Ron Grainer)



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Delia DERBYSHIRE (1937–2001)

was a British composer of electronic music and a member of the legendary BBC Radiophonic Workshop – a group of pioneering musicians and engineers responsible for producing sound effects and incidental sounds for TV and radio.

Delia Derbyshire created a new soundworld using electronic sounds, using these to arrange the melody for Doctor Who – one of the most famous TV shows ever!



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Watch/ listen to the opening theme!



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Doctor Who Theme



- The famous melody was actually written by Australian composer Roy Grainer. Delia's task was to 'realise' or 'arrange' the theme using electronic sounds to match the futuristic sci-fi nature of the programme
- Derbyshire's version uses 'found sounds' that were manipulated electronically. She recorded the sound of everyday objects onto tape and then changed the speed of the tape to create different pitches or looped single sounds over and over to create rhythms. This was back in 1963 before computers made such experiments easy!
- Scandalously, Derbyshire was not credited with the composition of the now iconic original version and received very little money for it

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[Watch here](#)

Watch the BBC Ten Pieces Trailblazers film presented by Segun Akinola. Segun became the composer for the Doctor Who show in 2018. He was inspired by the original work of Delia Derbyshire & Ron Grainer.

- Why were there so few women composers in the past?
- What might working at the BBC Radiophonic Workshop and inventing sound effects have been like?

How must Delia have felt after receiving no public recognition for her work?

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Listen to the music again

The piece is constructed from two different musical ideas.

- A pounding bass line (the low rhythm pattern) and
- A swooping melody

Choose two different colours, one to represent the base line and one to represent the melody.

As you listen draw the base line running across the bottom of the page.

Make shapes that represent the shape of the music. Remember just to focus on the base line.

Listen again and this time draw the swooping melody above the bass line across the page.

You have drawn a graphic score.

This is a different way to write down music

