

# The Chase

Ergo and Vicki show you how fast they can juggle without dropping everything, or at least make very fast music. They play you some of their very favourite speedy rhythms, generally all at the same time, then when it's finished they start it all over again. Features amongst others, different versions of William Tell Overture and Hungarian Rhapsody, and also Spike Jones, The Comedian Harmonists and Offenbach.

The music in this episode began as a section to a soundtrack to a collage-film by the multimedia artist Christian Marclay, which showed many fast moving images and all sorts of people chasing one-another. The requirement was for around two minutes of music, but the result was endless variations and permutations on the idea of chase music.

An important thought here was the idea of using sound-collage to create visual images and tell stories, cutting up sounds in rapid variations and juxtapositions to make the ultimate slapstick comedy chase, the chase to end all chases.

How is sound-collage used to tell stories and make pictures, an imaginary cinema that is different for every listener? It is something connected with our collective awareness of the meaning of a particular sound or type of sound. A slow dirge on trombones coupled with samples of hysterical weeping may conjure up the image of a funeral, but the nature of the sample used for the dirge will greatly alter the listener's perception and subsequent visual imagining of the sound - that is to say a sample of a dirge from an old crackly recording may cause an image of an old-fashioned funeral, men in dark top hats, ladies in bonnets weeping, etc., whereas it is likely that a modern sounding sample will conjure the image of a more contemporary funeral.

But enough of funerals. And dirges. Because we were talking about chases, weren't we? And as far as I'm aware they very seldom happen at funerals.

The principal, however, is the same. The name for music that is intended to tell stories turns out to be "Programme Music". At this stage we'll let our good friend Wikipedia do the hard work:

"Program music is a form of art music intended to evoke extra-musical ideas, images in the mind of the listener by musically representing a scene, image or mood [1]. By contrast, absolute music stands for itself and is intended to be appreciated without any particular reference to the outside world. The term is almost exclusively applied to works in the European classical music tradition, particularly those from the Romantic music period of the 19th century, during which the concept was popular, but pieces which fit the description have long been a part of music. The term is usually reserved for purely instrumental works (pieces without singers and lyrics), and not used, for example for Opera or Lieder." ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))

You might try using sound collage to evoke: (i) a man being pursued by wild ostriches through an endless jungle, (ii) the journey of an angry wolf with an upset stomach, or (iii) the massacre of a thousand VHS tapes by an infuriated accountant. Or anything else you can dream up.

