

# Time Lapse by Michael Nyman

In this lesson you will:

- Learn how Ground Basses are used by composers
- Learn about the challenges faced by composers who use Ground Basses
- Look at a specific piece of film music that uses a Ground Bass

## Time Lapse

Time lapse by Michael Nyman was originally composed for a film called *A Z and two noughts*, produced in 1984. Most unusually, the director, Peter Greenaway, asked for a recording of the music to be given to him before filming began and then planned the scenes with the feeling and mood of the music in his mind. Because it was composed before filming took place, the music for *A Z and two noughts* works just as well without the film as with it.

Timelapse is composed using a ground bass and a repeating chord sequence. A ground bass is a sequence of bass notes that repeats throughout an entire piece. This device was used particularly frequently by composers of the baroque period (1600 to 1750). This period in history inspired Michael Nyman and many of his compositions reflect this baroque influence.

Firstly listen to Time Lapse and use **worksheet 1** to help you.

Then, learn the ground bass together as a group, then add the chord parts below and melodies.

*Note: all the parts fit together and can be played at the same time.*

Next allocate parts to individuals or groups and plan a group performance of the piece. You will need to:

- Decide how many times the ground bass should be repeated, and on which repetition the chord part and melodies should enter
- Decide how to start and end the performance
- Write down a plan for your performance (who does what and when).

Ground Bass

Bass 2

5

Chords 3

Chords 3

Chords 2

Chords 1

Melody 1

Melody 1

Melody 2

Melody 2

Melody 3

Melody 3

5

Melody 3

Melody 4

Melody 4

4

Melody 4

7

Melody 4