

Design Course

Animation Music Video - 1

An Introduction

by

Prof. Phani Tetali and Samidha Gunjal

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/course/animation-music-video-1>



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Music Videos

Introduction:

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.” - Plato.

So true! As we all like listening to songs and especially young generation is crazy about Music. We have hundreds of Music channels available on TV; you tube video channels and on-air radio stations. Everybody enjoys watching and listening to music, almost all the time!

But have you ever noticed that we like those songs more, which have nice video to accompany the music! This happens because of the human tendency to visualize the song while listening or humming. That is exactly why it is equally important to make an interesting video along with good music.

The term Music Video is very familiar, so familiar that we have never felt the need to define it.

If you look it up, a music video might be defined as the integration of a song and appropriate imagery for artistic or promotional purpose is called as Music Video.

There are different styles and mediums to make these videos like live action films, or to render Animation, Stop motion, Pixilation, Abstraction and many other techniques.



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History

In the very beginning of the Music Video history, people got introduced to a term called 'Illustrated Music'. It consisted of photographic images painted in color and projected in sync with the music or song.

In 1920s, 'Talkies' marked the end of silent era. It featured many singers, musicians and dancers. Though the sound and the video appeared in sync in the 'Talkies' it was in fact played on two different devices.

After a year, Animation artist Max Fleischer introduced a series of sing-along short cartoons called 'Screen Songs'. Where they used animated visuals along with the music like bouncing ball hopping on the lyrics to encourage audience to 'sing along'.

In 1930s 'Musical films' came in picture. Walt Disney released animated films like 'Fantasia' and 'silly symphonies' that were based around pieces of classical music.

In 1940s new concept called 'musical films' and 'Visual Jukebox' came into being. 'Visual Jukebox' became very famous in no time. Musical film was 3 min. film featuring music and dance performances. Visual jukeboxes were installed in restaurants, bars and public places, where one could enjoy the musical films just by putting a coin in the jukebox.



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According to the music historians, in 1959 a singer and songwriter named J. P. 'the Big Bopper' Richardson, was the first person to use concept "Music Video" in an interview.

In 1960s, new visual jukebox called 'Scopitone' was introduced in France.

In 1964, The Beatles set the basic visual vocabulary of today's Music videos with the example of musical segments in the film called 'A Hard Day's Night'. They took the genre to new heights with their groundbreaking films 'Strawberry fields forever' and 'Penny Love' made in early 1967. They used many new techniques like reverse film effect, dramatic lighting, unusual camera angles and rhythmic editing which created height of the 'Psychedelic Music' period. They illustrated the song in an artful manner rather than just creating a film.

In 1970s, Music televisions started music shows like 'Countdown' and 'Sounds'.

1980s onwards, Music video became mainstream and it marked the start of music channel like MTV. The buggles' 'Video killed the radio starts' was the 1st Music Video played on MTV in 1981.

In 1990s, MTV started listing directors with the artist and songs credits and Music Video became an auteur's medium. Inspired from this, many famous Music video directors brought unique vision and style to the music videos they directed. And the concept of 'big budget music videos' came in picture.

Michael Jackson's 'Scream was the most expensive music video of all the times. (1995) He was the one to create the concept of short film music video that has a beginning, middle and end.

Towards the end of this era, MTV started many music channels around the world to telecast music videos.

2005 onwards the Internet became the fastest and easiest medium to enjoy music videos. Websites like you tube made music videos available all over the world. Inspired by the success on the Internet many artists started uploading their work and creating channels of their own.

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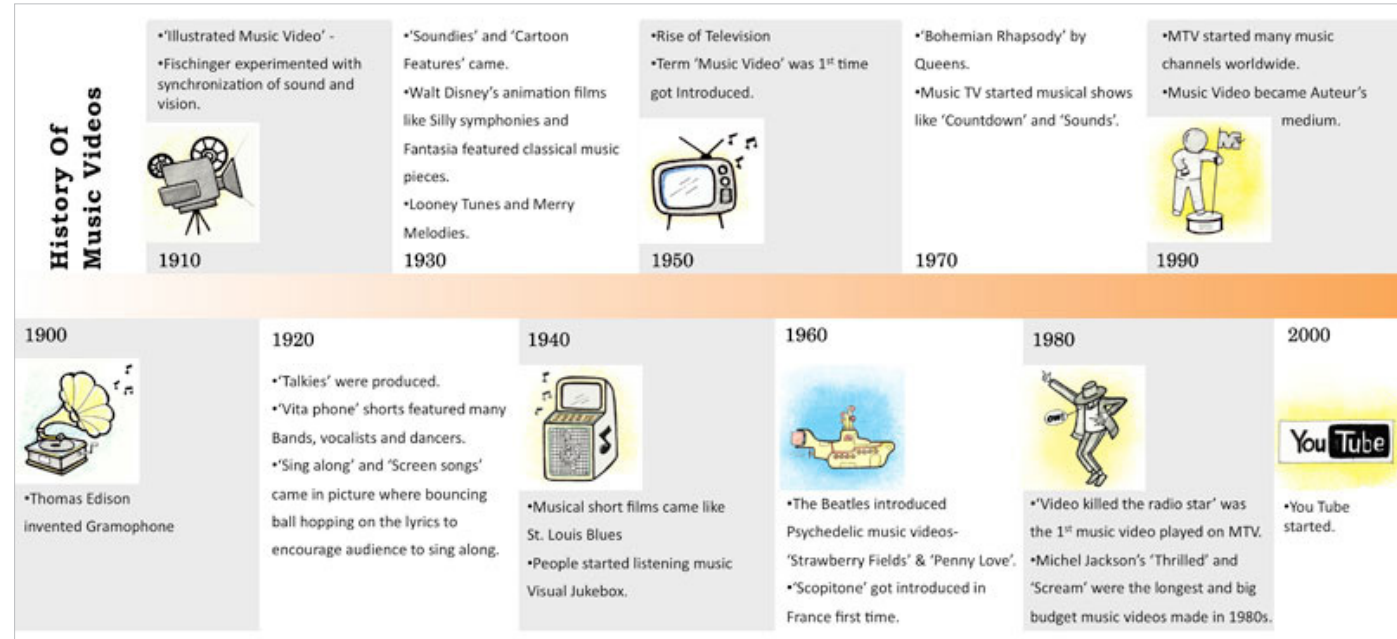
Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/course/animation-music-video-1/history>

History of Music Video:

Graphical representation of history of Music video on timeline.

View-PDF:



Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_video &
<http://www.history.com/news/the-music-video-before-music-television>

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Types of Music Videos

Music videos can be commonly categorized under following types based on the content they have.

There are different styles and mediums to make these videos like live action films or to render Animation, Stop motion, Pixilation, Abstraction and many other techniques.



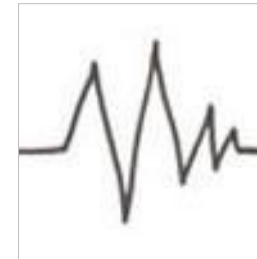
Featuring the Artists



Narrative Story



Artist Narrating Story



Abstract/Visual Montage

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Featuring the Artists

In this type of Music Video, generally the focus is only on the Artists including singers, musicians or both of them, shown performing on the stage or at the chosen location. Many times these are live performances shot and edited to create a music video for promotional purpose.

E.g. An artist/ singer is performing on stage alone or along with musicians.



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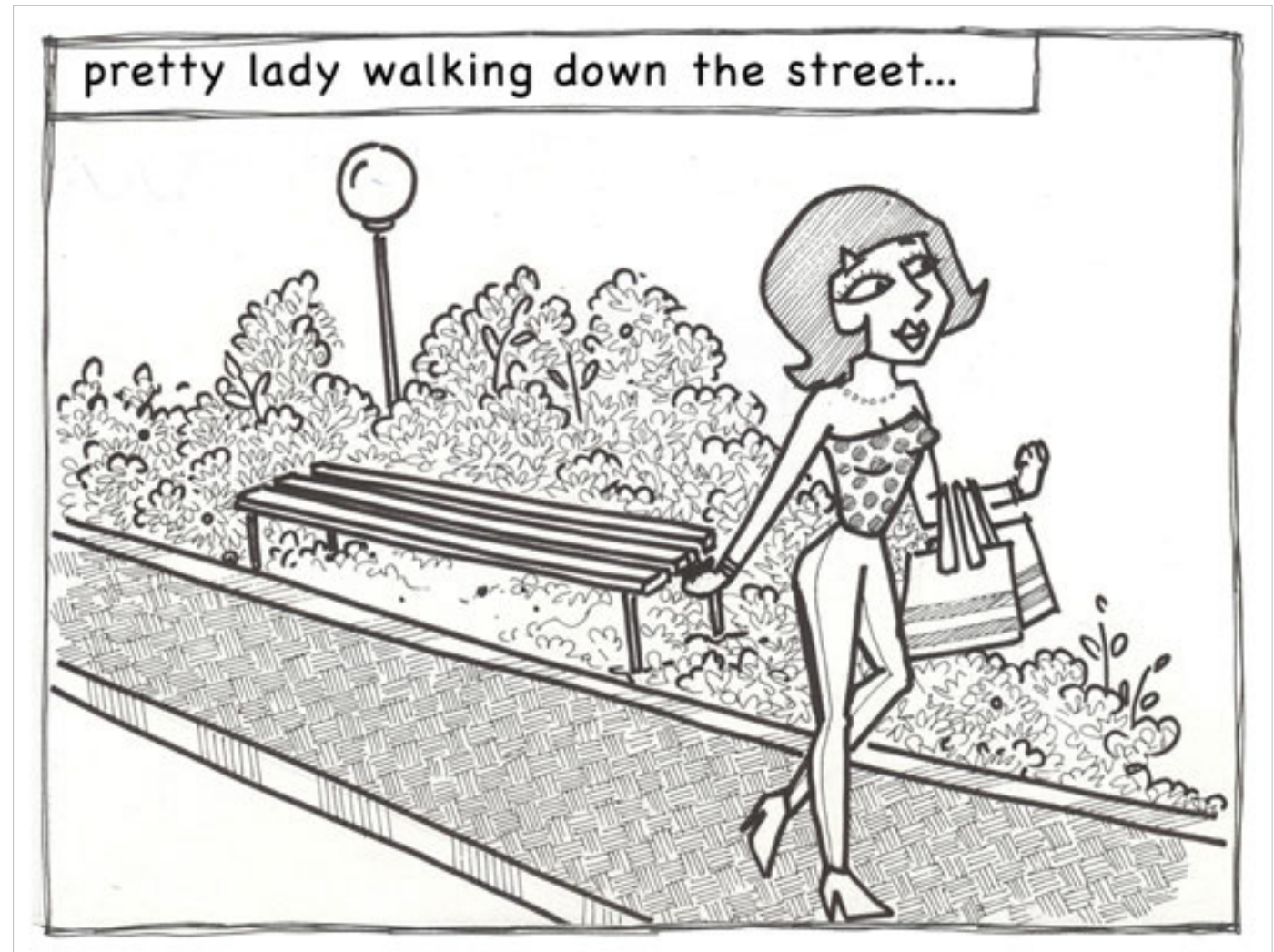
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<http://www.dsource.in/course/animation-music-video-1/types-music-videos/narrative-story>

Narrative Story

In this type of video, the focus is on conveying the story narrated in the song/ lyrics. Each element acts as an important part of the story reflecting the sentiment or event mentioned in the Lyrics of the song.

E.g. Some song, where the singer is telling a story about a pretty lady walking down the street and the video featuring the character of the Lady walking and not the Singer.



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Artist Narrating Story

This is third type of Music video; the singer/ musician is portrayed as a part of the story narrative. Where singer is singing/ playing musical instrument and acting out a character in the story.

E.g. the song is about a pretty lady walking down the street at the same time the singer/ artist is walking along with her or sitting and watching her and singing at the same time.



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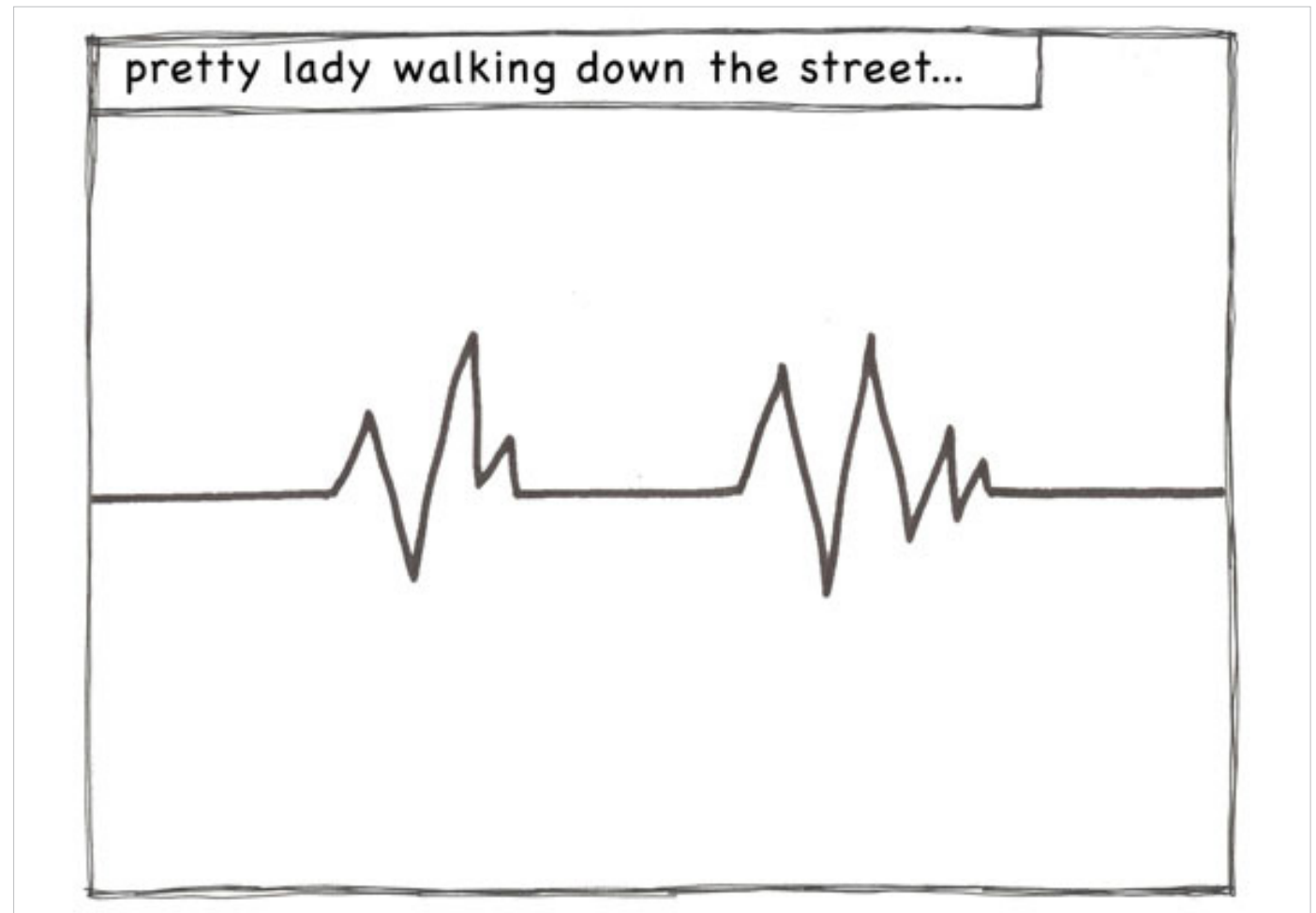
Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/course/animation-music-video-1/types-music-videos/abstractvisual-montage>

Abstract/Visual Montage

This is a real abstract way of making a music video in which the video may or may not have any relation with the song/ lyrics. It can be a random combination of different types of visuals like artworks, photographs, video footages, textures, patterns, anything that one can think of. There can be totally no relationship between the visuals and the story/ lyrics but it must be visually stimulating.

E.g. The same song about the pretty lady walking down the street and visuals could be anything that matches the rhythm. For instance: a waveform changing shapes or a flower blooming or anything that one can think of.



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Animation Music Video

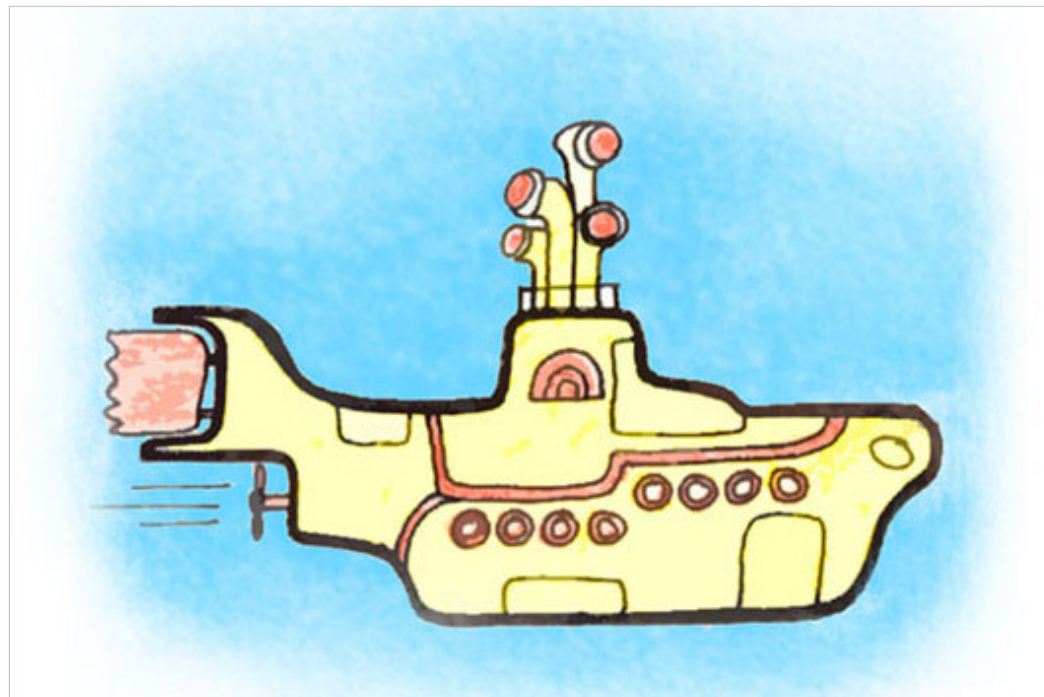
Animation Music video is a very old concept in history of music videos. It started with the 'Illustrated song' where photographed and colored images were projected on glass slides in sync with the music.

The very first musical video by Max Fischer introduced an animated bouncing ball in 'Sing along'. Walt Disney's Fantasia and Silly Symphonies were very famous animated musical films. Warner Brother's 'Looney Tunes' and 'Merrie Melodies' were based on songs from upcoming musical videos.

The animated musical video 'Yellow Submarine' based on the music of The Beatles was released in 1968, featuring animated character of Beatles.

In 1985, 'Take on me' by A-Ha was the first Animated Music Video created with 'Roto-scopy' technique. This video was created drawing over key frames from the footage from the video shoot.

Animation is a very interesting and creative way of making music video. Here any actors or pretty girls or exotic locations are not needed to showcase in music video.



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Making an Animation Music Video

With the help of animation you can make your own music video with your own style with a very low budget!

Surprised!

Trust me, it is comparatively simple to make your own music video with very little resources.

A music video is like a piece of art just like a painting or a sculpture, where you are the artist and your video is your canvas. And the limits of representation depend on your creativity. For this you have to follow some simple steps.



Selecting a Song



Brainstorming/
Daydreaming



Song analysis and
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Selecting a Song

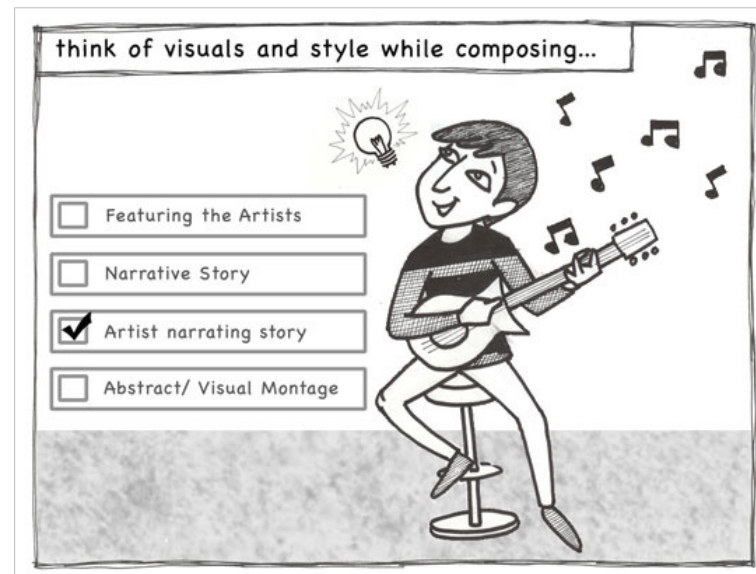
Selecting the song is the real challenge. If you are making Animation Music Video for fun or for educational project then you can take any song but remember to give credits to the composer or the singer of the song.

If you want to make it for professional purpose, you have to take official/ written permissions or it is better to choose royalty free music. There are many online sites available where you can choose between wide range of music's and songs that are Royalty Free.

There are different genres of songs like hard rock, soft romantic, very fast and intense, light hearted, very slow and sentimental, chase, rock n roll, etc. everyone has different taste in music however, you can select your own song.

As a beginner, I would advise you to start with a simple song. Which has a comparatively consistent beat and a simple structure in terms of music composition so animation sync can be easier.

If you are a singer or musician, you can create your own piece of music and animate to it. This will be easier because while composing song or music, you can think of appropriate visuals for it.



Select the right song that has lots of scope for animation and creativity. It is necessary to fall in love with the finalized song so you can enjoy the journey of making animation for the music video.

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Brainstorming/ Daydreaming

Once your song is finalized, close your eyes and listen to the song, many times.

Copy that song on your ipod, mobile, computer and keep listening to it on a loop. Until you become familiar with every beat, every word and every possible action in the song.

Listen to music seriously, close your eyes, and try to understand the meaning, think about the situations and let your ideas flow. Be creative, note down your ideas, even the stupid ones.



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Song analysis and Breakdown

After listening to the song many times, you can easily analyze whether it's a slow sentimental song or fast and intense song. What could be the story of the song? What elements could play a major role in the narrative? Which would be the best way to make this music video? Is the song focusing on the artist or it is narrative based? Is it abstract in terms of style? What will suit the mood of the song?

Once you understand the story of the song, break it down into small possible events or shots.

Timing is one important factor in music. Take a stopwatch and note down when a new line starts? When there is a shift in pace of music. Where is chorus starting? Make a dope sheet.

If you have any sound editing software, it will be easy to mark all these things on the waveform of the music. Also measure the time between two beats. You can also do this with the help of the 'scrub' option.

All these things will help animation and synchronization of the visuals to the music.



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Summary

Here are the preliminary steps in short:

- Select a song.
- Listen to it in loop.
- Try to visualize the story behind it.
- Write down your ideas, even the silly ones.
- Break the song into small events or shots.
- Mark the timing, music shift and chorus while scrubbing the song.

I will be explaining more about explorations, selecting the style, story boarding for making animation music video in second part of this module. i.e.

'Animation Music Video- Explorations (Part- 02)''- (coming soon...)



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Contact Details

This documentation for the course was done by Samidha Gunjal at **IDC, IIT Bombay**.

You can get in touch with her at
Email: [gdhamisa\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:gdhamisa[at]gmail.com)

You could write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

Helpdesk Details:

Co-ordinator
Project e-kalpa
Industrial Design Centre
IIT Bombay
Powai
Mumbai 400076
India

Phone: 091-22-25767820/ 7801/ 7802

Fax: 091-22-25767803

Email: [dsource.in\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dsource.in[at]gmail.com)

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