

Video 5: Design and Communication

Link to the video: nmcrc.co.uk/education/exhibition-project/video-5

What is good design?

In this section we are going to talk about design and communication. We all know when we see something that looks good, but why has it attracted your attention? Is it brightly coloured? Is it an advert with a great review or an amusing and catchy title, or an attractive model wearing an amazing outfit?

How can an image speak to you and grab your attention? Sometimes, design works so well that it doesn't even need words to communicate a brand. Take a look at these famous logos:



I bet you can name the products or organisations they are associated with.

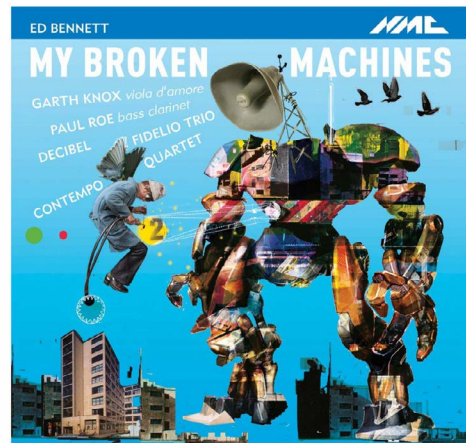
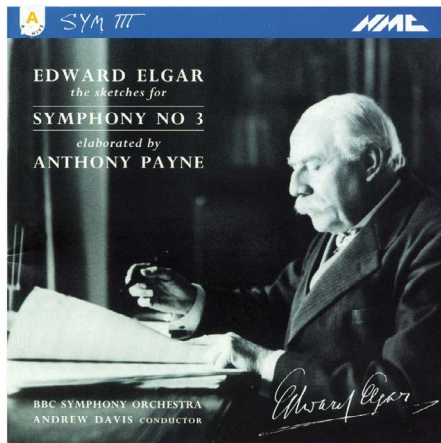
Design can be used to tell you more about a product, and at NMC, when we are designing the front covers for our albums, we consider a number of things to help us create the cover, including the style of music, and the inspiration or story behind the composition. The aim is to attract attention and give potential customers an idea of what to expect from the music before they have even listened to it.

Remember, album covers are not only seen on the product (for example a CD cover in a high street shop) – they also appear online, in stores like Amazon and Apple Music, and in magazines. Therefore, you need to create a cover that works in various sizes, in print and online.



Communicating through Design

Take a look at these two very different NMC album covers:



They both have the NMC branding (notice the blue banner at the top and the NMC logo), but the images are very different. What do you expect the music to sound like, based on the two cover designs? Think of a word that you would use to describe the album.

Let's see... The image on the front of the first album is in black and white and features the composer, Edward Elgar, who died in 1934. The design is quite old-fashioned and more traditional in style, and the title, *Symphony No 3*, is in an elegant serif font. What word did you pick to describe this album? Maybe old, traditional, orchestral?

The image on the front of the second album is very zany and colourful. The composer, Ed Bennett, is a lot younger and currently lives in Birmingham. The font is a sans-serif font and is bold and playful. How did you describe this album? Maybe modern, playful, weird?

It's not just the choice of image and font that matters – the quality of the image is really important too. If you want to make something look like a premium product, then everything needs to be glossy and of a high standard. A professional-looking product/brand = trustworthy.

Take a look at these two images:



Which one would you make sure you used on your product?

Yes, obviously we'd use the first image. The quality of the image and text is sharp, it is what is known as high resolution and good to use in print and online. When an image is low resolution, the text and image become blurry and pixelated, like in image two, and you'll want to avoid using images like this in the exhibition panels you are creating for this project.

What other ways can you get people interested in a product? Great testimonials or reviews work really well in promotion. Take a look at this film poster, featuring star ratings and great short review quotes. NMC does the same with its album reviews. You may want to feature them in a similar way to this poster on your exhibition panel.



Let's take a closer look at your task for this project. You have all been given an album/piece of music from the NMC catalogue to focus on. Consider what we've covered today about design and communication and pick one of the three panel templates. Each panel should contain at least:

- 🎧 the name of the composer and piece
- 🎧 a picture of the album cover
- 🎧 a short composer biography written by you
- 🎧 your review of the album.

You also have the option to include a photo of the composer, score extracts, and things that inspired the piece of music, such as paintings or poems. The templates are there to help you with the layout, so decide which one works best for the information you want to display. If you are comfortable doing so, and want to be more creative, feel free to adapt the template.



Typography

Consider the font you'll use on your panel and the size. Is it easy to read? Try not to mix too many different fonts as it can start to get messy. Keep it simple – pick a maximum of 2 or 3.









You'll see on this slide the difference between serif and sans serif fonts. Which style works best for your project? The more traditional serif font with its decorative edges, or the modern, smooth-edged sans serif font?



OK, it's now time for you to create your exhibition panel. Here's your checklist. I look forward to seeing your finished designs. Good luck!

Your checklist

Using some of the design techniques you've learnt about today, what can you do to make your panel eye-catching and informative?

-  What do you want to communicate? Style of music, type of composer etc.
-  What is it going to look like?
-  How can you use colour to make the panel more eye-catching? Does it match the album cover?
-  Do you have good quality images to use?
-  How are you going to display your writing? Did you enjoy the music?
-  What font(s) are you going to use, and what size?
-  Think about line spacing so that the text areas aren't too busy.
-  Check your spelling!

