**Visual Music Challenge Rough Guide**

This basic introduction to keyframe animation introduces students to sound-image synchronization, animation curves and After Effects.

Example: See projects at Maura McDonnell’s visual music blog.

<http://visualmusic.blogspot.ca>

This is a visual music jam, meaning that students will create an abstract music video by working individually on separate sections of the same song, which will be edited together afterwards. Working individually, each student will use After Effects to animate 200 frames (about 8 seconds at 24 fps) that is synchronous and expressive of their given segment of the soundtrack.

Each clip must include at least one bouncing ball with at least two bounces.

Use only shapes and effects that can be generated from within After Effects (no imports!)

Edit using the (lossless) Animation codec, which is good for solid colours.

Initial organization

1. The class must select 1 or 2 music tracks totally at least 3.5 minutes. We will put the file in the Class Share
2. Working in sequence according to seats, each student must note their start and end frame numbers as follows: 1-200, 201-400, 401-600, 601-800, etc.

Set up After Effects

1. Open After Effects
2. Main Menu>File>Project Settings: Set Time Display Style to “Frames”
3. Main Menu>Composition>New Composition

Composition Name=“yourname”\_”your start number”

Set Preset=Custom; 1280 x 720, square pixels, frame rate=24,

Start Frame=your start frame, Duration=200

1. Import the sound file
2. Drag the sound file into your composition
3. Expand the In/Out section (icon that resembles brackets at bottom left of layer name section of the timeline window).
4. Set the “In” point of the sound to 0: this will align your section of the music so that it is in between your neighbours’ sections.

Adding Shapes & Animation

1. Main Menu>Layer>New Shape Layer; Add ellipse (or…) + Add fill and/or stroke
2. Any attribute that has the stopwatch icon can by animated: click the stopwatch to set a keyframe, advance to another place in the time line, make a change in that attribute and another keyframe will be set. Keys may be repositioned in time by dragging them. The shape of the key determines its interpolation (right-click on the key to change the interpolation)
3. BONUS TECHNIQUE (Graph Editor): To manually adjust keyframe interpolation (which controls ease ins/outs or acceleration/decelerations), click on the graph icon (upper right of the layer name section of the timeline) to open the Graph Editor.

To position attributes to control Cartesian coordinates (x,y,z) & curves individually, click on the xyz icon and the bottom centre of the Graph Editor – note that this will disable bezier controls on the motion path in the composition window.

1. To Preview, hit spacebar (check on “Cache Before Playback in the Playhead box).

To Export:

Make sure that the “Work Area” covers the entire length of the composition

File>Export>Add to Render Queue

Specify the Output file.

Hit the “Render button”

Submit the AE file and the movie file to the Dropbox on the Class Share