

Florida Music Educators Association  
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## Beginnings

Brent Holl

## Description

We'll do several activities including songs, games, movement and listening, instrumentals and speech that will jump start the concepts that you teach during the year. How to begin is a great problem to have and solve. These activities will give some ideas to start each new activity with energy and enthusiasm. Focus: Orff Process; active singing; instrumentarium; song accompaniment; begin activities. Grades 3-8

### **Note to workshop participants:**

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## Begin with Song

# Laugh Canon

Brent M. Holl

1. 2.

Soprano Recorder

Ha ha ha ha, hee hee, hoh hoh, hoo hoo.

Hand Drum

SR

Ha ha ha ha, hee hee hee hee, hoh hoh hoh hoh, hoo!

HD

### Process:

- Read the Hand Drum Rhythm at sight using rhythm syllables of choice.
- Transfer to body percussion. Use a variety of sounds letting the timbre reinforce the strong and weak beats. Play in 2-part canon.
- Read the melody rhythm at sight using rhythm syllables or numbers, then letter names. Sing letter names in 2-part canon.
- Transfer to recorders. Play in 2-part canon.
- Add the text and sing the canon in unison reinforcing the vowels and good breathing technique with the aspirate “H.”
- Sing and Play drum part and melody in unison, then 2-part canon.

### Add movement:

- Move in one direction for every four measures in self-space (down, around, up, sway). The directions can be extended with arm and hand movements.
- Expand the movements to shared space with a partner. Use locomotor movement in different directions (forward, backward, sideways), changing direction every 4 measures.
- Perform as a song with movement and hand drums. 2 groups, each includes recorders, singers, and drummers.
- Try this body percussion routine: (From bottom to top: step, patsch left, patsch right, clap, bass tone.)

## Begin to Improvise (Use the Modes!)

### *The Modes*

**Ionian** - the equivalent of the diatonic major scale, by far the most used and most comfortable to our modern ears.

**Dorian** - Ritualistic, grave, pensive, mostly minor with a hopeful lilt. One of Plato's favorites, the notes of which, "fittingly imitate the utterances and accents of a brave man who is engaged in warfare."

**Phrygian** - Also a favorite of Plato suitable "for a man engaged in works of peace."

**Lydian** - a diatonic scale with the raised fourth, more major than major. It becomes impish, weird, eccentric and as Plato warned, "prone to sloth and drunkenness."

**Mixolydian** - a major scale with a flat tire (lowered seventh degree), this mode is happy, humorous, fun, and energetic. Old Time tunes and songs often use this mode.

**Aeolian** - a powerful, melancholic, poetic mode familiar to us as the natural minor scale.

**Locrian** - this unstable mode is rarely used... discussion may ensue.

- Find each mode on the Orff instruments or simply demonstrate each one from the piano.
- Discuss each mode, what it sounds like, what its distinct characteristics are.
- Let the class pick one.

### Listen to the mode.

- Find the chosen mode on the instruments.
- Play one half note on each note, ascending.
- Play one half note on each note, descending.
- Change to quarter notes, then eighth notes.

### Review Question/Answer

Aim - Build confidence with rhythmic and melodic improvisation using the Question/Answer format.

- Give the class a question using body percussion; all answer.
  - » Make sure everyone ends at the strong beat of the last measure. "Final Point."
  - » Make sure the answers are not an exact imitation of the question.
  - » Make sure the answers are related to the question.
- Ask who wants to give the teacher a question?

- All get a partner, question answer with each other.
- Discover:
  - » The cadence point (**The Final Point**) on the last strong beat of the answer.
  - » The absence of a cadence point (**Final Point**) in the question (think CHA, CHA, CHA).
  - » The commonality or shared ideas between the question and answer. The answer should have common elements with the question.
  - » The question and answer phrases are the same length.
- Give the class a question using an Orff instrument (or the piano);
  - » Make sure everyone ends at the strong beat of the last measure *on THE TONIC*.
  - » Make sure the melodic answers are not an exact imitation of the question.
  - » Make sure the melodic answers are related to the question.
- All get a partner, question answer with each other.
- Discover:
  - » The cadence point (**The Final Point**) on the last strong beat of the answer on the Tonic note.
  - » The absence of a cadence point (**Final Point**) in the question. Discover the “tenor” note or “dominant,” a great place to end the question (but not a requirement).
  - » The commonality or shared ideas between the question and answer. The answer should have common elements with the question.
  - » The question and answer phrases are the same length.

## Compose!

- Establish 4/4 meter and phrase length. A good place to start is two measures of 4/4, a total of eight beats for the question (antecedent) phrase and the answer (consequent) phrase.
- Class gets to improvise the phrase length. Don't worry too much about endings, only phrase length.
- Ask students to share.
- Pick one phrase as the question. Fix and adjust it (aha! Composition!)
- Class gets to improvise the answer phrase. (Everyone plays the question in unison, then answers. Yep, it's pretty noisy.... Go as long as you can stand it. Make 'em play quietly or! Do this whole exercise with fingers only! Or the question with mallets, the answer with fingers.)
- Ask students to share.
- Pick one answer phrase that works.
- Play the new melody!

## Extensions

- Orchestrate the new melody for the students. (Use those great new skills you learned in Level 2 Orff Basic!)
- Ask students to experiment with bordun accompaniments and various ostinatos, both rhythmic and melodic to create an accompaniment.
- Here's an example from a Stewart Middle School 6th grade class:

# CYNDI'S SONG

IONIAN

CYNDI  
ARR. BRENT HOLL

SOPRANO XYLOPHONE

GLOCKENSPIEL

ALTO XYLOPHONE

BASS XYLOPHONE

This system contains four staves. The Soprano Xylophone staff features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The Glockenspiel staff has a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth-note chords. The Alto Xylophone staff plays a melodic line with eighth notes. The Bass Xylophone staff provides a bass line with quarter notes and triplet eighth notes. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

SX

GLK.

AX

BX

This system contains four staves. The SX staff continues the melodic line from the first system. The GLK. staff continues the rhythmic accompaniment. The AX staff continues the melodic line. The BX staff continues the bass line with quarter notes and triplet eighth notes. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.