

13 Drumkit

RESOURCES ▶ CD1 track 13 ▶ Warm ups: Nos. 1–5, 28, 29

Information

This piece and the next one only use ‘unvoiced’ sounds. These are sounds made using only the mouth, lips, tongue, and teeth, and without ‘engaging’ or using the vocal cords (as in a sustained ‘ah’); most consonants are examples of unvoiced sounds. Many of the sounds are whispered. Between them, the lines of this round describe the sounds of bass drum and snare drum, crash cymbal, high hat, and floor and mounted tom tom. The piece focuses on rhythm and articulation only, and provides a good opportunity to explore the subtle differences with a limited range of vocal effects.

Starting

- Start by breathing deeply and letting the air out to a sustained hiss for breath control.
- Develop this by letting the sound die away or decay like a cymbal sound.
- Explore the differences between long and short ‘boom’, the tightness of ‘ti ti ti’, and the dull or ‘dead’ sound of ‘dv’ at different places—high, medium, low—in the voice.

Teaching and rehearsing

- Read all of the lines together first, one after another, being sure to make a difference in the quality of the sound. Sounds must be as close to the real thing as possible. Produce the sounds right at the front of the mouth.
- Observe the rests, and work on the distinction between *staccato* and accented notes.
- Try as a round in two, then three, then four parts.

- Divide into four groups and give a group a line to perform and stick with, so they really perfect its sound and articulation.

Ideas

- Try performing the round at different volumes. Tape record the performance and discuss its success and possible improvements. A quieter performance might be more effective than a loud one. This is a good way of controlling over-exuberant singers too!
- Add other lines to represent other percussion instruments. The inventors could notate them as well.
- Write some more rhythm sound-pieces using these ideas. Suggestions are a train, a photocopier, a machine, a factory production line, a robot, etc.
- Experiment with voiced sounds (fuller and more spoken); decide if it adds anything to the piece. Select the most effective sounds.

Listen out

- The most important feature here is the distinction between the sounds, and the care taken over articulation. There is scope to explore some really subtle differences and good control.
- Make sure the performance is rhythmically strong and together.

Performing

- Enjoy the sensation of being a vocal instrument and perform with conviction. A small group could form the drumkit to the performance of another song.

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Clive Kempton

1 Boom ch boom boom ch boom ch boom boom ch

2 ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti

3 tsss tsss

4 Dv dv dv Dv dv dv

Detailed description: The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. Staff 1 has a melody of quarter notes with accents, corresponding to the sound effects 'Boom ch boom boom ch boom ch boom boom ch'. Staff 2 has a melody of eighth notes with accents, corresponding to 'ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti'. Staff 3 has two half notes with accents, corresponding to 'tsss tsss'. Staff 4 has a melody of quarter notes with accents, corresponding to 'Dv dv dv Dv dv dv'. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.