



This unit introduces the children to the concept of 'off-beat' music through listening to *Hound Dog* performed by Elvis (rock and roll music), *I got you (I feel good)* by James Brown (funk music) and *Le Freak* by the group Chic (funk/disco music). 'Off-beat' music is where, for example, in a group of four beats, the strong beats fall on beat 2 and 4, rather than on each beat. Exploration of off-beat music requires the children to be familiar with metre (where the beat of the music is split into regular groups) and 'beat music' which they studied in Autumn B of year 2 (where music has strong beat, often, with a strong emphasis on all beats in a group). They also learn that the first beat of a group, which is usually a strong beat is called the 'downbeat'.

By listening to rock and roll/funk music in this unit the children also develop understanding of the distinctive sounds of a rock and roll band including the double bass, guitar and drums and the 'horn' section (trumpets, trombones and saxophones) of a funk band.

The children start the unit by feeling the off-beat in *Hound Dog* and moving and clapping to the off-beat. They go on to create an off-beat composition from lessons 2-6, as a class creating a layered texture of parts which uses off-beat rhythmic patterns over a pulse by chanting, clapping, and using body percussion in a verse/chorus structure.

By concentrating in this unit on metre and rhythm this unit also provides the opportunity to revise and learn stick notation for rhythm to show crotchets, paired quavers, minims and rests. This builds on knowledge from year 2 in Autumn B (Beat Music) and Summer A (Storms in Sound) where the children learnt words and symbols for crotchets, paired quavers and rests. In this unit they add the words and symbols for a minim to their increasing repertoire of knowledge.

Lesson Sequencing

In lesson 1 the children are introduced to 'off-beat' music as exemplified by the song *Hound Dog*. 'Off-beat' music is where, for example, in a group of four beats, the strong beats fall on beat 2 and 4, rather than on each beat. To learn about 'off-beat' music the children first revise what they have already learnt about metre (where the beat of the music is split into regular groups) and 'beat music' which they studied in Autumn B of year 2 (where music has strong beat or pulse, often, with a strong emphasis on all beats in a group). They learn that 'off-beat' music is like the opposite of beat music. They also learn that the first beat of a group, which is usually a strong beat is called the 'downbeat'. *Hound Dog* was written Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller in 1952. It was originally

recorded by Big Mama Thornton in 1953 and has since been recorded more than 250 times. The best-known version was recorded by Elvis Presley in 1956. Elvis was from the U.S.A. *Hound Dog* is an example of 'off-beat' music. The children listen to Elvis singing the song, clap and move to the off-beat to start to gain an understanding of this concept in music.

In lesson 2 the children explore how *Hound Dog* is a simple song, made up of a chorus and verses which have the same music. By watching a clip of Elvis performing the song in the year he first recorded it they have the opportunity to identify the instruments which made up his band (double bass, guitar and drums) and accompany the singing. They go on to create off-beat, rhythmic patterns over a pulse by chanting, clapping, and using body percussion to create a verse/chorus structure.

In lesson 3 the children explore another piece with a strong off-beat: *I got you (I feel good)* by James Brown from the U.S.A. The song was first recorded by Brown in 1965 and is his highest-charting song. It is an example of funk music which Brown was instrumental in developing. As well as a strong off-beat, the song has an emphasis on the first beat of every four beats which was typical of funk music. Brown said when he wrote *I got you* that he wanted to create a song that people would dance to. After exploring *I got you* by clapping to the beat and off-beat the children go on to revise what they learnt in year 2 about using stick notation symbols to represent rhythmic patterns, using the words ta and ti. They then revise the activity from lesson 2, this time using the words ta and ti to represent some of the rhythms which they created.

In lesson 4 the children explore the instrumentation which James Brown used in *I got you* and how the sound of the 'horn' section (trumpets, trombones and saxophones) was one of the typical sounds of funk music. They then learn the vocabulary and symbols for a two-beat note (a minim) and a rest, which forms the basis of starting to build rhythms for their own verses as part of the off-beat class composition which they will develop next lesson 5. In lesson 5 the children listen to *Le Freak* by Chic. Chic, who still exist as a band today, first formed in 1972. They are known for their disco/funk music and recorded '*Le Freak*' in 1978. Disco was a genre of dance music which gathered pace in the U.S. in the 1970s. Other examples of artists who made disco music during this period are Abba, The Bee Gees, Earth Wind and Fire and Sister Sledge. They finish the lesson by practising their own off-beat compositions for performance/recording in lesson 6.

In lesson 6 the children practise, perform and evaluate the piece which they developed in lessons 2-5, learning that we can evaluate a performance to make it better next time. By practising the piece so it is ready for performance they develop their skills in playing together in a group, following the directions of the teacher who acts as the conductor.

Musical Focus

Pulse/Beat/Metre

- Off-beat music
- Grouping beats in 4s (metre) and the downbeat

Rhythm

- Stick notation to show crotchets, paired quavers, minims and rests
- Moving/Dancing to music

Texture/Structure and Form

- Songs with accompaniments
- Verse/verse and chorus

Links to Prior/Following Units

Year 2

Autumn A—*Ostinato II* (Metre— grouping beats in 2s and 3s)

Autumn B—*Beat Music* (Pulse/Metre—Beat music, grouping beats in 4s; Structure/Form and Texture—Verse and chorus, melody and accompaniment; Stick notation—crotchets and rests)

Summer A—*Storms in Sound*, (Stick notation—crotchets, quavers, rests)

Summer B—*Lullabies* (Structure/Form—Verse and chorus, unaccompanied/accompanied, singing in parts)

Year 3

Summer A—*Stories in Sound II* (Stick notation—showing crotchets, paired quavers, minims and rests)

Year 4

Autumn A—*Working Songs* (Structure and form—songs with call and response; Texture—melody with rhythmic accompaniment; Metre—identifying pulse and metre in common time(4/4); Stick notation— showing crotchets, paired quavers, minims and rests)

Autumn B—*Take the 'A' Train* (Structure and form –song form AABA, Rhythm and metre– 4/4 (common time), off-beat; Texture—Melody and accompaniment; Stick notation— showing crotchets, paired quavers, minims and rests)

Spring A—*Beethoven's 5th* (Stick notation—crotchets, paired quavers, minims and rests)

Summer B—*Announcing an Entrance* (Rhythm and Metre—Crotchets; 4/4; rhythmic imitation; Notation—Stick notation showing crotchets, paired quavers, minims and rests, time signature and bar lines)

Outcomes

Compose and perform a composition using an off-beat rhythm, setting words to rhythms in verse/chorus form.

Key Learning Points

- The down beat is the strong beat at the beginning of a regular group of beats
- An off-beat rhythm is where, in a group of 4 beats the strong beat falls on 2 and 4
- Rock and roll, funk and disco music often have a strong off-beat
- A song can be made up of verses and a chorus
- A song can be sung by one or more voices and accompanied by different instruments
- We can use symbols to represent rhythmic patterns for ta, ti, ta-a and rests

Progression: Technical, Constructive, Expressive

Singing

Children learn and sing call and response and action songs, to warm up at the beginning of each lesson. This develops their technical singing skills which include posture hold, breath control, singing with a pulse, imitating rhythms, varying speed, holding a particular pitch, varying pitch, varying volume and singing together in an ensemble. Practising songs over the course of six lessons ensures familiarity and increasing sophistication of musical expression.

Listening

Children practise 'active' listening, developing their technical skills of feeling, clapping and moving to the beat and different rhythmic patterns. By listening to rock and roll, funk and disco music which makes use of the off-beat they begin to have conscious understanding of how music is constructed, focussing on the dimensions of pulse, metre, rhythm (including stick notation for rhythm), texture and structure/form. By listening to rock and roll/funk music they develop understanding of the distinctive sounds of a rock and roll band including the double bass, guitar and drums and the 'horn' section of a funk band. By studying songs from the varying genres of rock and roll, funk and disco they develop an increasing understanding of the expressive qualities of music from different cultures/genres.

Practising

Composing and practising a piece which makes use of the voice and body percussion and to create rhythms over a pulse develops technical motor skills and an internal sense of pulse and rhythm. Creating a piece which layers different rhythms over a pulse in a verse/chorus structure develops knowledge of handling pulse, rhythm, metre, texture and structure/form as component dimensions of composition. Practising the skills required for building the composition gradually over the course of the unit, ensures increasing confidence and sophistication in the expressive quality of musical outcomes.

Performing

Working towards performance of a composition over the course of six lessons ensures increased technical accuracy, confidence, fluency, expression and the ability to play securely in an ensemble, following a conductor.