

This unit introduces children to music which uses the voice and body percussion. They do this by focussing on the piece 'Connect It' by the contemporary British composer, Anna Meredith. Meredith writes for many different instruments including whole orchestras and also creates and performs electronic music. Her music is often called 'uncategorisable' because she mixes many different musical genres together including classical, pop and experimental rock. Her piece 'Connect It' doesn't feature any instruments at all but uses the voice and the body to create sound. By using the voice and body in different ways Meredith creates different timbres (the character of a musical sound). In 'Connect It' a variety of rhythmic sounds and movements are passed between the performers. This musical effect is known as a canon. A canon is where two or more instruments, voices or sounds play the same music, but starting at different times. The children have already encountered canons in year 3 (Autumn B—Pachelbel's Canon) and year 5 (Autumn B—This Little Babe).

In this unit the children also listen to the song 'Where is the love?' by the Black Eyed Peas as an illustration of how different sections of music can be contrasted by a change in timbre. The Black Eyed Peas is a U.S. hip-pop group formed in the 1990s who gained popularity in the 2000s. Hip-pop (also known as melodic hip-hop or melodic rap) is a genre of music fusing rhythm-based rap with pop music's melodious vocals. The Black Eyed Peas have always been made up of both rappers and singers. Their song 'Where is the love?' from their third album 'Elephunk', which was released in 2003, was their first major hit. The group's founding member, will.i.am said the song was originally born out of anxiety after the 9/11 attacks. The lyrics discuss many issues including terrorism, racism, gang crime, pollution, war and intolerance, with a call for love which appears in the chorus tying these elements together. **Teachers should use their discretion as to how much of this information to give to the children they teach considering the sensibilities, knowledge and personal circumstances of the cohort.**

The children use their investigation of timbre and canon to create their own composition over the course of the unit, creating rhythmic motifs using body percussion and the voice. They notate these motifs in a table and layer them together in a canon to create four simultaneous parts. They formalise this into a rhythmic composition in ternary form (made up of three parts, A B A) which makes use of contrasting timbre, tempo (speed) and dynamics (volume). They record the piece in a graphic score and perform the composition as a class following a conductor which can be the teacher, or a child.

## Lesson Sequencing

In lesson 1 the children are introduced to the concept of timbre, by listening to 'Connect It' and considering how the sounds in the piece are made. They then explore creating different timbres using their voices and body percussion, putting these together over a regular pulse (the heartbeat of the music) in groups of four. They record four different 4 beat patterns in a table.

In lesson 2 the children further investigate the movements the performers make with their bodies and the sounds which they make with their mouths in 'Connect It'. They distinguish between voiced (using the vocal chords to make a sound) and unvoiced (not using the vocal chords to make a sound) sounds. They then learn new stick notation for semiquavers (ti-ka-ti-ka) to add to the existing rhythmic notation which they are already familiar with. They incorporate this notation into their own rhythmic patterns which they devised in lesson 1. They add physical movement to the rhythmic patterns, using the movements made in Meredith's piece as inspiration.

In lesson 3 the children explore how a canon is used in 'Connect It' and how they can create their own canon as a class using layers of the rhythmic motifs which they created in lesson 2.

In this lesson 4 the children listen to 'Where is the love?' by the Black Eyed Peas as an illustration of how different sections of music can be contrasted by a change in timbre. They start to build a composition as a class in ternary form (A B A) which incorporates a change in timbre and tempo (speed), using the canon developed in lesson 3 as section A. They learn that 'allegro' means 'at a fast tempo' and 'adagio' means 'at a slow tempo'.

In lesson 5 the children practise the piece in ternary form which they developed in lesson 4 and add dynamics (indications as to change in volume). They learn that 'forte' (f) in music means loud, 'mezzo forte' (mf) means moderately loud, 'piano' (p) means quiet and 'mezzo piano' (mp) means moderately quiet. They then create a graphic score for the piece (like a picture which acts as a guide or musical map) incorporating markings for dynamics and tempo.

In lesson 6 the children practise, perform and evaluate the piece which they developed throughout the course of the unit, 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 an ensemble and their skill in following the direction of the teacher/a child who acts as a conductor to keep the music together.

## Musical Focus

### Instrumentation and Timbre

- Creating sound with body percussion and movement
- Using the mouth to make sounds

### Metre/Tempo/Rhythm

- Time signatures: 4/4
- Contrasting tempi (adagio and allegro)

### Texture/Structure and Form

- Canon
- Combining rhythmic motifs in layers
- Ternary form

### Dynamics

- f (loud), mf (quite loud), p (quiet), mp (quite quiet), crescendo (getting louder), diminuendo (or decrescendo – getting quieter)

### Notation

- Stick notation to show crochets, paired quavers, minims, semiquavers and rests
- Notation showing time signatures and bar lines
- Markings for tempo and dynamics

## Links to Prior/Following Units

### Year 5

Autumn A—The Lark Ascending (Timbre—How instruments can create different sounds; Structure and Form—Ternary form; Dynamics—Crescendo, diminuendo)

Autumn B—This Little Babe, Spring A—Beethoven’s Eroica (Notation—Stick notation showing crochets, paired quavers, minims, rests, time signatures and bar lines)

Spring B—Jin-Go-La-Ba (Rhythm—Layering of rhythmic patterns, syncopation)

Summer B—English Folk Songs (Rhythm—Simple time v compound time)

### Year 6

Autumn B—The Hallelujah Chorus (Instrumentation and Timbre—to create mood; Stick notation showing crotchets, paired quavers, minims, semibreves and rests)

Spring A—Blues and the Groove (Rhythm— 4/4 time)

Spring B—Minimalism (Texture—Layering of repeated rhythmic and pitch patterns; Rhythm, metre and tempo—different tempi; Dynamics—f, p, mf, mp, cresc. and dim.; Instrumentation and timbre—combining acoustic and electronically produced sounds)

## Outcomes

Create rhythmic motifs using body percussion and voice. Notate these motifs and layer together in a canon and four simultaneous parts. Formalise into a rhythmic composition in ternary form using contrasting timbre, tempi and dynamics. Record in a graphic score. Perform composition as a class following a conductor.

## Key Learning Points

- Timbre means the character of a musical sound
- We can create different timbres using body percussion, our voices and our mouths
- A canon is where two or more parts play or sing the same music but starting at different times
- A composition can be in ternary form (A B A)
- 'Allegro' means at a fast tempo. 'Adagio' means at a slow tempo.
- 'Forte' (f) = loud. 'Mezzo forte' (mf) = moderately loud . 'Piano' (p) = quiet. 'Mezzo piano' (mp) = moderately quiet
- We can use symbols to represent rhythmic patterns for ti-ka
- A graphic score is like a picture which acts as a guide or musical map for a piece of music

## 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. Warm up songs are also used to revise reading stick notation for rhythm, as well as introducing the concept of a canon, by singing a song in rounds. Practising songs over the course of six lessons ensures familiarity and increasing sophistication of musical expression.

### Listening

Children practise 'active' listening, carefully observing the different timbres, rhythms, forms/structures and accompanying physical movement used in the music which they listen to, and develop their technical skills of feeling, clapping and moving to the beat and creating different rhythmic patterns and different sounds with their voices in response. By listening to the chosen music they begin to have conscious understanding of how music is constructed, focussing on the dimensions of timbre, pulse, rhythm, metre, texture, structure/form, dynamics and notation. By studying 'Connect It' in contrast to 'Where is the love?' they begin to develop an increasing understanding of the expressive qualities of music from different cultures/genres.

## **Composing/Practising**

Composing and practising a piece which makes use of the voice and body percussion to create different rhythms using different timbres over a pulse develops technical motor and vocal skills. This, and creating a piece in three parts (A B A) in canonic layers over a pulse develops knowledge of handling timbre, pulse, rhythm, metre, texture, structure/form and dynamics as component dimensions of composition. Building the composition gradually over the course of six lessons, requiring repeated practise 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 leader/conductor.