

Developing the B Section:

Incorporating Student Compositions

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Richard Lawton: Clinician

One of the hallmarks of Orff Schulwerk is the use of student-composed *B sections* that can be added to teacher-provided musical ideas. Nothing motivates kids like having a creative say in their musicking, and the development of a B section (or a sequence of B sections) is a great way for them a chance to contribute to the final product.

This workshop will focus on strategies using all Orff media — movement, singing, playing — to fill up these windows of creative opportunity with student-composed work.

Who Will Get The Penny?

In her book *Elementaria*, Orff Schulwerk co-founder Gunild Keetman described *rhythm building bricks* - two-beat musical ideas based on quarter and eighth note combinations — as the foundation upon which all student composition is based. This idea can be adapted to fit almost any children's song or game.



Sequence:

Students sit cross-legged in a circle, hands behind their backs making a birds nest. The teacher walks around the outside, hiding a key, a penny, and paper clip, while chanting A shown here (students echo each line).

A Who will get the penny?
Who will get the key?
Who will get the paper clip?
Maybe me!

I will get the penny!
I will get the key!
I will get the paper clip!
We shall see!

B Q: Who has the penny?
A: I have the penny!
Q: Who has the key?
A: I have the key!
Q: Who has the paper clip?
A: I have the paper clip!
All: Let us see! Let us see!

For *B*, everybody chants the questions and the people who are holding the objects in question chant the response. Play at least three rounds, hiding one of each object, then two objects, then three. The chant can also be sung on *so-mi*.

To develop the B section — Organize the pennies, keys, and paper clips according to the number of syllables in each word. Additional objects — combs, chopsticks, sunglasses — can be added that fit these patterns. I usually add one additional object that has four syllables.

Set up four sheets of construction paper in a four square configuration. Students are invited to add one of the objects to each of the four squares and then read the pattern.

Students can teach their B section to their classmates. Discuss which patterns seem to work best (e.g., patterns that end with one syllable). Even young students can learn to make aesthetic judgments.

Note — Pattern recognition is something kids are very responsive to, particularly if it is in the context of a puzzle or a game.

Ding Dong Diggidiggdong

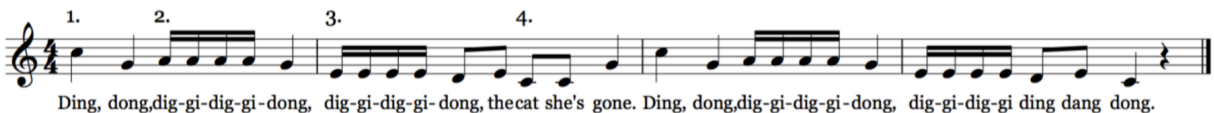
adapted from MFC Vol. I, p. 24

The material in the Orff *Music for Children* volumes is specifically intended as a platform for children's improvisation and composition. In the O/S classroom, the development of these instrumental pieces provides especially good opportunities for students to work together.

Ding, Dong, Diggidiggdong

(*Music for Children*, Volume I, p. 24)

Orff/Keetman

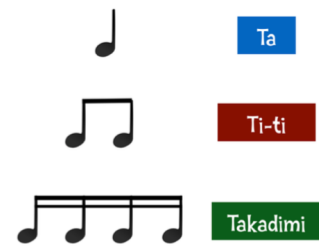


Ding, dong, dig-gi-dig-gi-dong, dig-gi-dig-gi-dong, the cat she's gone. Ding, dong, dig-gi-dig-gi-dong, dig-gi-dig-gi ding dang dong.

Sequence:

Teach students this well-known O/S canon (which appears in *Music For Children Vol. I*, by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman). If they are being introduced to the concept of sixteenth notes, spend some time developing a feel for *takadimi* by patting it out on the legs (*tas* and *ti-tis* can be clapped).

Ding dong diggi diggi dong:
 Diggi diggi dong the cat she's gone.
 Ding dong diggi diggi dong:
 Diggi diggi ding dang dong.



Convert the entire song to the rhythm syllables and try mixing them up to create different rhythms of comparable phrase length.

To develop the B section — When the students are proficient, put them in 4 or 5 groups. Have them develop complimentary speech pieces using the names of dogs and corresponding rhythms shown. Each of their pieces will have four lines where at least one of the lines is different. (They should strive to choose an idea that everybody in their group can perform.)

Hey now, what about the dogs?



Ta Dogs

- Hound
- Spitz
- Pug
- Mutt
- Choy

Ti-ti dogs

- Poodle
- Husky
- Boxer
- Collie
- Beagle

Takadimi dogs

- Cocker Spaniel
- Golden Doodle
- English Foxhound
- German Shepherd

“Mixed” Breeds

- Basset Hound
- Akita
- Terrier
- Airedale
- Pomeranian

Put a piece together where *Diggidiggidong* becomes the A section and is interspersed with the individual B section compositions. Use the phrase “Hey now, what about the dogs?” when transitioning from A to B.

Lovely Springtime Now is Here

Song and process learned from James Harding

A SPRING ROUND

ICELAND*
ENGLISH WORDS BY J. HARDING

BELLS ARE RING-ING, DEW DROPS CLING-ING BUGS ARE WING-ING BIRDS ARE SING-ING PEEP
SA EG SPO - A SUOUR I FLO - A SYN-GUR LO - A UT I MO - A SI

PEEP PEEP PEEP LOVE - LY SPRING-TIME NOW IS HERE!
SI SI SI VORIÓ ER KO - MIÓ VIST Á NY

This idea of developing a series of student-composed B sections and alternating them with the main musical idea can be adapted to world music and folkloric material.

Sequence:

Before hand: have 4 *-ing words* on cards to distribute.

Bracing
Facing
Pacing
Lacing

Bailing
Trailing
Jailing
Mailing

Smelling
Yelling
Telling
Gelling

Shaking
Baking
Snaking
Faking

Weeping
Sweeping
Leaping
Peeping

Sighing
Crying
Buying
Flying

Looping
Stooping
Hooping
Whooping

Stopping
Hopping
Mopping
Flopping

Teach the the song “A Spring Round.” (The more ambitious can try it in Icelandic!).

Create hand movements for each of the signs of spring (such as ringing hands to indicate bells). Create BP for “peep, peep, peep, peep” and “lovely Springtime now is here.” Once the song/movement has been learned, it becomes the A section.

To develop the B section — distribute the *-ing word* cards to small groups and give them a few minutes to develop their own verse with gestures.

Perform as a rondo with each group’s verse being one of the B sections. Perform the final A section as a canon with as many parts as there are groups.

Snowflake Song

This is an activity which I have used several times as the basis for a 2nd grade winter holiday performance. It is adapted from material in the wonderful book *They Came Singing; Songs from California’s History* by Karen Arlen, Margaret Batt, Nancie Kester and Mary Ann Benson. Here, students develop a single B section with multiple parts.

Sequence:

Post the words to the song as shown. Since the words have no correlation to English, ask the students to identify phonetic patterns as they speak the words.

(As of 1994, the Mono language had fewer than 40 native speakers left, and my understanding is that the exact meaning of these words is not known.)

Snowflake Song

trad. Mono Paiute/ar. Lawton

The musical score is written in 2/4 time and consists of three staves. The lyrics are in Mono Paiute and are placed below the notes. The first staff contains the first line of the song, the second staff contains the second line, and the third staff contains the third line. The lyrics are: "T'a nee tsee na ah na ma ma no ho___ pen. T'a_ nee tsee ta nay tna a na ma ma no ho___ pen. T'a nee tsee ta nay tna a na ma ma no ho___ pen. Nee tsee ta nay tna a na ma ma no ho___ pen." The lyrics are repeated across the staves.

T'a nee tsee na ah na ma ma no ho___ pen. T'a_ nee tsee ta nay tna a na

9
ma ma no ho___ pen. T'a nee tsee na ah na ma ma no ho___ pen. T'a_ nee tsee

18
ta nay tna a na ma ma no ho___ pen. Nee tsee ta nay tna a na ma ma no ho___ pen.

Ask students to suggest some possible meanings for *t'a nee see na ah na mama na hopen*, such as, “snow falls from the sky and blankets the earth.” Have the students develop a series of gestures that help convey the meaning.

This becomes the A section of the performance.

To Develop the B section — Ask students to work in small groups to develop lines of a prayer to the Snow Gods (remember — snowstorms in the Sierras are fierce!). Other students develop a dance related to snow.

A third group develops accompanying music in *La on D pentatonic*. Typically a short phrase from the original melody becomes the basis for ostinati that can be developed into a groove. For instrumentation, ask students to think about timbres associated with American Indian music but also think about combinations of sounds that are likely to paint a picture of snow.

Perform ABA, with the music and dance performed as backdrop to the collective snow prayer.

Richard Lawton is the general music teacher at Roscomare Road Elementary School in Los Angeles and the recorder instructor in the Los Angeles County and the University of Southern Florida Summer Orff Courses. Richard is a past numerous state and national conferences and the 2018 California Music Educators Association/Peripole General Music Teacher of the Year.

Contact: richard@richardlawtonmusic.com

