

Elemental Composition

The model compositions in the Orff-Schulwerk Music for Children Volumes 1-5 and the supplemental collections published by Schott were intended to give teachers flexible examples of simple, appealing music that could serve as a springboard for classes focused on creative work with the elements of music and movement. In today's example we will be using a short piece from the "Playbook for Xylophones #3" (Spielbuch für Xylophon 3) to explore mallet technique, improvisation in the minor pentatonic scale, and the forms ABA and canon. Our work on this composition by Gunild Keetman will give us an admission ticket to listen to a piece by J.S. Bach and be inspired by a 20th century collaboration between contemporary choreographer Mark Morris and the cellist, Yo-Yo Ma.

Warm-Up: The Yellow Umbrella

1, The Yellow Umbrella. This wordless picture book by Korean illustrator Jae Soon Liu shows colorful umbrellas from above on the way to school. There are many ways of using the images as a kind of musical score. The form is cumulative, with more and more umbrellas joining in on each page.

- Colors=timbre groups (yellow, blue, red, green)
- Play and stop

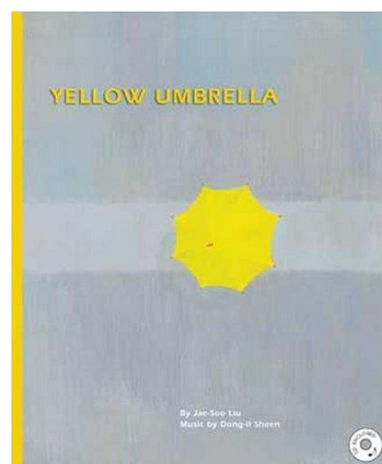
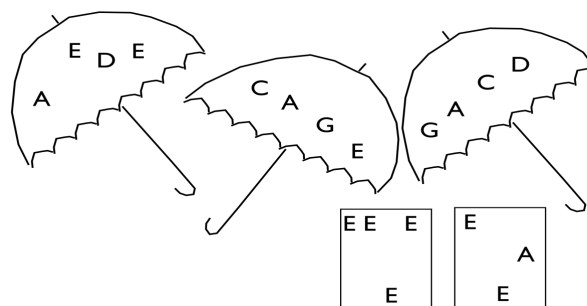
With my Kindergarten classes, I also challenged them to find images in the book that showed the following features of the city, as seen from above, and respond with their mallets:

bridge	Play up and down the scale
playground	Mallets up like monkey bars
fountain	Splash mallets
staircase	Climbing up scale note by note
high-speed train	Glissando across the bars
Tall buildings	Mallets up to show buildings

Etc.

Intro to Gunild Keetman's Canon for Xylophones:

- Umbrella conducting (dynamic)
- Technique work (left hand melody, right hand pedal)



Building a Gesture Canon

(inspired by Mark Morris/Yo-Yo Ma “Falling Down Stairs”)

The Bouree movement from Bach’s Cello Suite number 3 is choreographed by Mark Morris for dancers on a set of stairs performing a sequence of gestures. In the first A section of the music, the sequence is performed in unison. In the second A section, the sequence is performed in a three part canon.

Canon

Gunild Keetman

AX /BX

5

From Spielbuch für Xylophon Volume 2 Schott ED 5577

When creating a canonic sequence, think about contrast between the phrases that will eventually overlap:

- Space- do the gestures take place in front of the body core, above, to the sides?
- Sound- do the gestures have sound? Are they silent?
- Tempo/Dynamic- Are the gestures fast moving, slower-moving, staccato or legato?
- Point of focus- Are dancers looking straight ahead? at the hands?

PHRASE A	PHRASE B	PHRASE C	PHRASE D
	PHRASE A	PHRASE B	PHRASE C, etc.

Some ways of working:

- Emphasize simplicity- something we can remember easily
- Build phrase by phrase, asking for ideas from the group and also asking members of the group to come out and help choose movement phrases
- Once the sequence is being practiced and tried in unison and in canon, have some dancers come out to look at it and offer suggestions or just enjoy what it looks like

For more information about Orff: NCAOSA (ncaosa.org) (Northern California) or American River AOSA (arosa.org) (Sacramento Area) or AOSA (aosa.org) National Organization.

Thanks to CASMEC for inviting me to present, and to Peripole for instruments! Yours, James