

Improvisation

Part I: Chapter 25

Asymmetrical Meters

Add A Rhythm

- **Process:**
 - Basic: Divide class into teams of 5-8. Using rhythm syllables, Student A chants a known one beat rhythm pattern from Part I, Chapter 25. Student B echoes the pattern and adds a different one beat rhythm pattern; Student C echoes the patterns chanted by Student A and B and adds a different one beat rhythm pattern; Student D echoes the patterns chanted by Student A, B and C and adds a different one beat rhythm pattern; etc. The beats should be a combination of beat division groupings of twos and threes. For example: (a) 3 + 2; (b) 2 + 3 + 3; (c) 3 + 2 + 3, etc.

Add A One Beat Rhythm

The musical notation consists of nine rows, each labeled with a letter in a box (A through I). Each row contains a sequence of rhythmic patterns separated by vertical bar lines. The patterns are as follows:

- A:** quarter, quarter, quarter
- B:** quarter, quarter, quarter
- C:** quarter, quarter, quarter
- D:** quarter, quarter, quarter
- E:** quarter, quarter, quarter
- F:** quarter, quarter, quarter
- G:** quarter, quarter, quarter
- H:** quarter, quarter, quarter
- I:** quarter, quarter, quarter

- Variation I: One team improvises on a neutral syllable using the process listed above while the other team(s) writes the patterns (dictates) the patterns.
- Variation II: Integrate accents, articulations and/or dynamic into the rhythm patterns.

• **Parameters:**

- Select asymmetrical meters and corresponding rhythm patterns from Part I, Chapter 25. The instructor designates the asymmetrical meter (duple, triple or quadruple), physical motion (metric motion, heel march, circular hand/arm motion, and/or down-up/ down-up-up motion) and then sets the tempo.
- Remember to perform the patterns (a) with inflective expression (foundation of phrasing) and (b) while moving to meter, macro beat, or micro beat (facilitates understanding of rhythm).

This activity also works musical memory!

Pass the Pattern

• **Process:**

- Divide class into teams of 5-8. Using the elements from Part I, Chapter 25, the instructor or Student A chants a known rhythm pattern (neutral syllable or rhythm syllables). Student B improvises a similar but different rhythm pattern that MUST start with the last rhythm element in the pattern chanted by Student A. Student C improvises a similar but different rhythm pattern that MUST start with the last rhythm element chanted by Student B. Each additional student's pattern must start with the last element of the previous improviser.

Below are four different teams (A-D; E-H; I-L; M-P).

Pass the Pattern

The image displays four rows of musical notation, each representing a different team's rhythm patterns. Each row starts with a circled letter (A, E, I, M) and a treble clef. The notation consists of rhythmic patterns of notes and rests, with double bar lines separating the patterns. Team A (A-D) shows four patterns. Team E (E-H) shows four patterns. Team I (I-L) shows four patterns. Team M (M-P) shows four patterns.

- Variation I: The instructor or Student A chants a known rhythm pattern (neutral syllable or rhythm syllables). Student B improvises a similar but different rhythm pattern that MUST start with the last rhythm element in the pattern chanted by Student A. Student C improvises a similar but different rhythm pattern that MUST start with the first rhythm element chanted by Student B. Each additional student alternates tasks.
- Variation II: One team improvises on a neutral syllable while the other team(s) writes (dictates) each pattern.
- Variation III: Individually practice *Pass the Pattern* using the MP3 rhythm files found in Part I, Chapters 21, located on the Oxford Learning Link.

- **Parameters:**
 - Rhythm patterns to be selected from Part I, Chapter 25. The instructor designates the meter (compound-duple, triple or quadruple), physical motion (metric motion, heel march, circular hand/arm motion, and/or down-up motion) and then sets the tempo.
 - Remember to perform the patterns (a) with inflective expression (foundation of phrasing) and (b) while moving to meter, macro beat, or micro beat (facilitates understanding of rhythm).

The goal is to develop spontaneous, rapid, automatic reaction to what is heard.

Additional Improvisation Activities

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| • Call and Response
See Chapter 2 for instructions | • Same or Different
See Chapter 2 for instructions | • Add A Rhythm
See Chapter 2 for instructions |
| • Pass the Pattern
See Chapter 3 for instructions | • Ostinato Groove
See Chapter 6 for instructions | • Anything You Can Do . . .
See Chapter 10 for instructions |
| • Change Challenge
See Chapter 14 for instructions | • Table of Truth
See Chapters 4 & 13 for instructions | • Twisted Theme
See Chapter 22 for instructions |
- **Parameters:**
 - See the indicated chapter on the Oxford Learning Link, Improvisation-Part I for instructions.
 - Integrate patterns in asymmetrical meters found in Section 25.2 and 25.3 into the improvisation activities above.
 - The instructor designates the meter (asymmetrical-duple, triple or quadruple), physical motion (metric motion, heel march, and/or down-up and down-up-up motion with hands) and then sets the tempo.
 - Remember to perform the patterns (a) with inflective expression (foundation of phrasing) and (b) while moving to meter, macro beat, or micro beat (facilitates understanding of rhythm).

The ability to improvise is a skill that can be learned!

Students' musical fluency is individual and personal in nature and improvisation gives students a space to explore these personal decisions (Michael Patrick Wall, 2018).