

COMPOSED FOR THE PRESTO PROJECT BY LAURA SHEILS

1. s d m r t d m f m d r m s m r

2.

3.

4.

5

d s l s f m s f r d m r t d

The image shows a musical score for a 7/8 canon. It consists of two staves of music in G major and 7/8 time. The first staff contains four measures, each starting with a blue number (1, 2, 3, 4) above the staff. The lyrics 's d m r t d m f m d r m s m r' are written below the first staff. The second staff starts with a blue number '5' above the staff and contains the lyrics 'd s l s f m s f r d m r t d'. The music is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (F major/D minor).

choir



## 7/8 CANON

### USING THIS CANON

Compiled for the Presto project  
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## FOR DEVELOPING YOUR POLYPHONIC SKILLS

This newly composed canon offers a great opportunity to improve familiarity with the less common 7/8 time signature. Previously, in the Presto Level 2 canons, we encountered *Denise's Fleece*, also in 7/8 time, but here the structure of the beats is a little different, with the seven quavers grouped as 12-12-123 rather than 123-12-12, making the third beat the longest in this case. Maintain a crisp pulse throughout, emphasising the notes that fall on the three beats of each bar, to enhance the canon's energetic, happy character.

Once you have completed the challenge of singing and playing the canon in two parts, add further complexity for example by playing one part with your right hand and another part with your left; by singing one part and playing more than one additional part simultaneously; by changing the key; and by performing at a faster tempo.

## WITH YOUR CHOIR OR SINGING GROUP

This is a catchy, enjoyable canon to perform as a group. Take care to teach the rhythm very precisely, using movement such as stepping from foot to foot to emphasise the beats in each bar, or by adding suitable body percussion patterns to reinforce the irregular patterns of the 12-12-123 structure, such as stamp-clap, stamp-clap, stamp-clap-clap. This will also help to energise and refresh the singing and contribute to the joyous mood of the piece.

Use conducting gesture to indicate clearly when the melody should restart after reaching the end of the first time through, giving a vigorous preparatory beat and breath.

The canon works well in two, three, or four parts, but if your group has enough members and sufficient confidence in singing, it will work in any number of parts up to a maximum of eight, by adding a new entry every bar. This creates a dense texture that is great fun to sing.

## IN THE MUSIC LESSON

This canon works well when converted to the harmonic minor key, as well as to a variety of different modes, for example Aeolian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian. Experiment with singing the melody using different modes, changing the solfa to suit, and enjoy the somewhat strange sound worlds that ensue. This piece doesn't work quite so well in the Locrian mode; can you figure out why? Find other canons in the Presto collection that can be successfully performed in alternative modes, and enjoy performing these for each other in the class.

Use this canon as a gateway to musical repertoire in 7/8 time. Research other pieces that use this metre, and figure out whether those pieces use the same 12-12-123 groupings or if they are organised differently. Conduct along with each example to help ascertain their rhythmic structure.