

COMPOSED FOR THE PRESTO PROJECT BY SEÁN DOHERTY

1. 2. 3. 4.

De - nise sees the fleece. De - nise sees the fleas. At

5

least De-nise could sneeze, A-Choo! and feed and freeze the fleas.

The image shows a musical score for a choir. It consists of two staves of music in 7/8 time. The first staff has four measures, each starting with a blue number (1, 2, 3, 4) above it. The lyrics are: 'De - nise sees the fleece.', 'De - nise sees the fleas.', and 'At'. The second staff starts with a blue number 5 above it. The lyrics are: 'least De-nise could sneeze, A-Choo! and feed and freeze the fleas.' The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

choir



DENISE'S FLEECE

USING THIS CANON

Compiled for the Presto project
by Dr Róisín Blunnie

Dublin City University, 2023

FOR DEVELOPING YOUR POLYPHONIC SKILLS

This newly composed canon is in 7/8, a time signature that we rarely encounter in canon repertoire. The seven quavers of the time signature are grouped into three beats in each bar, using a 123-12-12 pattern, meaning that the first beat is longer than beats 2 and 3. Sing and play each note carefully according to this division, and emphasise the three main beats energetically to enhance the irregularity.

WITH YOUR CHOIR OR SINGING GROUP

Conduct with three beats per bar, based on the 123-12-12 quaver groupings. Encourage a clean upbeat by breathing together on the preparatory beat and attacking the first note with energy and a sense of fun. To help your choir to feel the pulse, ask them to conduct with you while they sing the melody, as part of the learning process.

An accompaniment is provided. You can play the accompaniment on an instrument, or play or download a backing track on the Presto website.

IN THE MUSIC LESSON

Create a rhythmic ostinato using body percussion to help keep the rhythm steady and secure, for example stamp-clap-clap, stamp-clap, stamp-clap. Have fun discovering who can make the best sneezing sound (a-choo!) and offer them a chance to do a sneeze solo. Introduce the concept of extra-musical content, when we use non-musical items, such as a sneeze, as part of a piece of music.

Compare the rhythm pattern in this canon with that used in the 7/8 canon composed by Laura Sheils, in Level 3 of the Presto canons. Spot the difference in the way the seven quavers are grouped.

Creative activities: composer Seán Doherty suggests the following ideas based on the tongue-twister text of this canon:

- *Discuss the questions below and then act out the scene.*
- *Why does Denise have a fleece? (A fleece is a warm coat made from wool of a sheep or goat.) Why does she have fleas? Why does she need to feed the fleas if she's going to freeze them? What would happen if she didn't sneeze?*
- *Take your own name and make up a similar tongue twister. Like this:
John sees the swan, on the chiffon. At least he wasn't wrong, it was chiffon the swan was on.*

Optional Accompaniment

