

COMPOSED FOR THE PRESTO PROJECT BY SEÁN DOHERTY

1. Near an ear, 2. a near - er ear, 3. a 4. ear, a

5. near - ly 6. eer - rie, 7. eer - rie 8. ear.

The musical score is written on two staves in 2/2 time. The first staff contains measures 1-4, and the second staff contains measures 5-8. The lyrics are: 'Near an ear, a near - er ear, a near - ly eer - rie, eer - rie ear.'

choir



THE NEARLY EERIE EAR 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 serves as an opportunity to become familiar with the whole tone scale. In this scale, the octave is divided into 7 whole tones, and therefore, unlike the more common major and minor scales, there are no semitone steps involved, and the scale does not have the usual pillar of a perfect 5th between the first and fifth degrees.

WITH YOUR CHOIR OR SINGING GROUP

Prepare for this whole tone piece using exercises that pave the way for the tone set. We can approach the whole tone scale by dividing it into three cells of do-re-mi: the first beginning on C, the second on E, and the third on A flat (=G sharp). Use solfa hand signs to help, and support orientation and tuning by playing an octave C on the piano.

Ascending

Descending

Optional Accompaniment

When singing with text, encourage the singers to use a resonant, blended 'ee' vowel.

This canon works well in any number of parts from two to eight. 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

Use this canon as a gateway to music of different genres that uses the whole tone scale.

Creative activities: Guide the students in improvising on an instrument using the notes of the whole tone scale. Discuss the emotional effect: does it sound scary? If desired, students can work in pairs: one student uses only C, D and E; the other uses only F#, G#, and A#.

Composer Seán Doherty provides the following ideas based on the text of this canon:

- 'Eerie' is something that is strange or frightening, like something in a ghost story. Why is this ear eerie? Tell your favourite ghost story in groups.
- Make up a new rhyme using alliteration, using words that start with the same letter, like the 'happy hand'.
- Use different parts of your body to make noise, e.g. clap, click, stamp, etc. Can you create some music using just these noises?

