

COMPOSED FOR THE PRESTO PROJECT BY LAURA SHEILS

1. l d m f m r d t l 2. d d t r d t m f

5. 3. m r f m r d t l 4. d r d t l

choir



MINOR SYNCOPA

USING THIS CANON

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FOR DEVELOPING YOUR POLYPHONIC SKILLS

This canon offers an opportunity to develop capabilities in working with syncopated rhythm patterns. These patterns occur here where emphasis is removed from the beat and placed instead on the offbeat, for example by tying quavers over the barline, or using the quaver-crotchet-quaver motif, in this case tied to a subsequent note.

WITH YOUR CHOIR OR SINGING GROUP

The rhythmic characteristics outlined above result in a melody that has a strong sense of energy and vigour. Conduct using a crisp, clear 4 pattern, and allow the singers to emphasise the offbeats as appropriate relative to the pulse-based conducting. As part of the teaching process, ask the singers to tap or stamp a steady beat while learning the phrases of the melody, so that rhythmic clarity is present throughout and the offbeat emphases remain rhythmically well-controlled.

When the melody has been learned securely, add further parts step by step, and notice the momentary clashes that occur as adjacent notes sound together.

IN THE MUSIC LESSON

Use this canon to develop your students' rhythm-reading skills. Once the piece has been extensively experienced through singing in unison and in canon, work on analysing the difference between the pulse (steady beat) and the rhythm.

Approach this first as a practical exercise by dividing the class into two and having one group clap or stamp the pulse while the other claps the rhythm. Then, challenge the students to do both simultaneously by stamping the pulse while clapping the rhythm, or by tapping the pulse with one hand and the rhythm with the other. After that, deepen the students' rhythmic understanding by comparing the notation of both, as shown here:



The image displays two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, both with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The top staff, labeled 'Pulse', shows a steady, regular rhythm of quarter notes. The bottom staff, labeled 'Melody', shows a more complex rhythm with syncopation, including quarter notes, eighth notes, and a quaver-crotchet-quaver motif tied across a barline.

LEARN MORE

To explore different characters of conducting patterns in 4/4, see the 'Fundamental Conducting Technique' area of the Presto Choral Resources.