

Found Sound

for music, movement and storytelling - Steve Grocott

Warm up – your brain is part of your body

On Bonfire Night

On Bonfire night at five o'clock

I took my money to the firework shop

I bought a rocket and it cost one pence and I put my rocket by the fence

And my rocket went...Whoooooooooosh

On bonfire night etc.....I bought a whizzer and it cost two pence and I put my whizzer by the fence

And my whizzer went

Whiz - Whiz - Whiz - Whiz - Whiz

And my rocket went... Whoooooooooosh

I bought a rip-rap and it cost three pence etc.

And my rip-rap went...Rip - Rap - Rip - Rap - Rip

I bought a fountain and it cost four pence etc.

And my fountain went

Whoosh - Whoosh - Whoosh - Whoosh - Whoosh -

I bought a banger and it cost five pence etc.

And my banger went - Bang - Bang - Bang - Bang - Bang

I bought a Roman Candle and it cost six pence ...

And my Roman Candle went...Phut - Phut - Phut - Phut Phut - Phut - Phut - Phut -

Phut - Phut - Phut - Phut - Phut

There are many physical, emotional and cognitive connections happening when we sing, move and use instruments with an action songs like this :

- We are using the musical aspects of language (rhythm, pitch, dynamics, timbre) and connecting that with movement
- We are using the mathematical aspects of our natural musical abilities – sensitivity to patterns – instinctively grouping beats – feeling a quantity
- We can focus attention on **number** by counting the jumps and explicitly grouping the thirteen Roman Candle sounds in fours plus one (this is happening unconsciously already)
- We can focus on **phonological awareness** by practising the “p” sound at the end of “bump” and by segmenting and blending the ‘wh-ooooo-sh

We don't have to be going on about the last two points all the time for the process to take place - in fact if we do too much of this it will get in it's way.

Finding sounds

Using our rhythm sticks we can explore the sonic qualities of all the objects in the room or outdoors in the environment.

A collection of odds and ends brought in to experiment with might include :-

metal objects, pots and pans plastic bottles and containers, cardboard tubes, pieces of wood of different sizes, china and earthenware (flower pots), glass, different kinds of paper, bags of different materials, hollow and solid things - something that doesn't easily make a sound at all like plasticene, a tissue or dishcloth.

General points to organise thinking about materials and sound :

Vibration

There are many ways of making things vibrate: striking - bowing - blowing - shaking - plucking - stroking - scraping - dropping - whirling

Even rhythm sticks sound different according to how much you let them vibrate. Try holding them loosely and tightly and hear the difference.

Metal things will give a longer sound but only if they are free to vibrate so things may need to be suspended on string.

Damping will cause a shorter sound with a different timbre. This can be very useful musically because once you have two sounds you can start to make more interesting patterns.

Most objects will make different sounds depending on where you strike them - this can be musically useful.

Materials

Different materials have a different timbre and their sounds have varying duration. As young scientists children need to be aware of the value of a negative result so experiment with materials that don't make very interesting sounds - soft things for instance.

Resonance

The ear drum vibrates as sound waves hit it. If you hit a small drum while holding it next to a large drum you can hear the big one resonating.

The shape of the object makes a big difference to how it resonates. Hollow objects resonate well and that is why guitars, violins and double basses are all hollow objects of different sizes.

You can hear the difference in clapping if you make a hollow shape with your hands compared to a flat-handed clap.

Size

Small things tend to make a high sound or pitch and larger ones tend to be deeper. A xylophone shows this principle in a very clear way and the pitches are precise so they can make clear melodies. Tick-tock blocks have less of a feel of an actual note but still have the high/low contrasting sounds.

Tubes that are thinner and shorter will make a higher pitched sound when tapped or when we blow across the top.

Tension

Another factor affecting pitch is tension. Higher tension in strings and drum-skins results in higher pitch - easy to explore with elastic bands.

Hard and soft

Hard and soft beaters produce a different timbre (Imagine a tune played on a trumpet or a flute - these are different timbres).

Having a range of beaters will produce a much greater range of sounds. You can use bamboo skewers, chopsticks, dowel and commercially produced hard, medium and soft beaters. Soft beaters are essential with any kind of metal bar or gong. They can be made by wrapping cloth or rubber band around a stick.

Pulse and rhythm work

The clock song

What does the clock in the hall say ? - 'Tick - tock - tick - tock'

What does the clock on the wall say ? - 'Tick - tock - tick - tock - tick - tock - tick'

What do little watches all say?

'Tick - a - tick - a - tick - a - tick - a - tick - a - tick - a - tock'

And the grandfather clock goes - Boing - Boing - Boing - Boing

- This action song embodies (literally) the pulse that underpins music
- All these kinds of songs work equally well using just voice, body percussion, whole body movement or a range of instruments

This song has a wide range of "uses". Tiny babies, like everyone else, find the "boing" funny – older children can use the ideas to help with compositions and accompaniments.

To 'teach' the different clocks we use ways of being musically expressive which shows the connection between mathematical patterns and affect (our emotions).

We evoke different mind-sets to teach this song and get the most out of it. When we emphasise the enjoyable crescendo and STOP for the little watches we are in the area of drama and emotions. When we are counting to group the beats in fours we are in a more labelling, analytical mode.

A general principal is that we can always add complexity or difficulty to a simple song, rhyme or story. It is often better to do this rather than start with something complex because starting with something everyone can do and taking them forward rather than setting the less able up to fail.

The Bogeyman

Mummy in the kitchen doing a bit of fixing

In comes the Bogeyman

To chase Mummy out BOO !

"Oh," says Mummy "That's not fair"

"Oh," says the Bogeyman "I don't care, I don't care, I don't care!"

Daddy in the kitchen doing a bit of mixing

In comes the Bogeyman

To chase the Daddy out "BOO !"

"Oh," says Daddy "That's not fair"

"Oh," says the Bogeyman "I don't care, I don't care, I don't care!"

Granny in the kitchen doing a bit of stitching

In comes the Bogeyman

To chase Granny out "BOO !"

"Oh," says Granny "That's not fair,"

"Oh," says the Bogeyman "I don't care, I don't care, I don't care!"

Baby in the kitchen doing a bit of screeching

In comes the Bogey but Baby says "BOO !"

"Oh," says the Bogeyman "That's not fair"

"Oh," says the baby

"I don't care I don't care I don't care!"

And the Bogeyman ran away.

In this video where children are just learning the rhyme you can see how effective The Bogey Man is in organising the children's drumming in an enjoyable way.

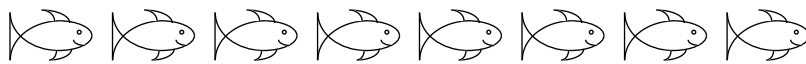
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW8pXr0UCI0&t=53s>

"There they lie, the nursery rhymes, so much at the back of our minds that we can't remember when we first learned them. What did they give us, so long ago? A suggestion that mishaps might be funny rather than tragic, that tantrums can be comical as well as frightening, and that laughter is the cure for practically everything."

Iona Opie on the Mother Goose rhymes

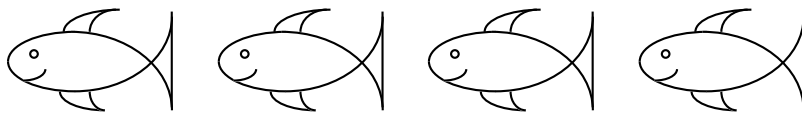
Oceanology

Little fishes swim along



Flip - per flap - per flip - per flap - per flip - per flap - per

Bigger fishes sing this song



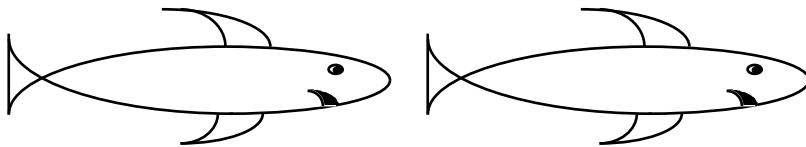
Swish

swash

swish

swash

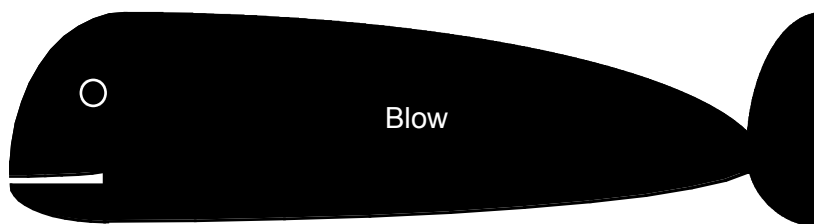
After them there comes a shark



Snap !

snap !

And the great big whale goes



Blow

Deep in the deep

The shark never sleeps
Little fishes swim away
For to live another day

This page from the Bright Sparks Booklet shows how the different pulses in the rhyme relate to each other mathematically. Each one relates to one of the clocks in the The Clock Song.

- The first rhyme provides pulse ideas and the second a rhythm template.
- There is an underwater context that implies a sound world awakening the imagination and facilitating all kinds of non-rhythmic sound making where the voice and instruments can be used as sound effects (think of film music).
- There are two contrasting moods implying contrasting pitch (high and low) and timbre (the quality of a sound – think of the same tune played on a tin whistle or a tuba) between the little fish and the shark.

Things to remember that will help enliven any musical activity –

First use the body and voice before thinking about instruments

Use a jamming approach which means :

- Lots of repetition
- Trying different things
- Humour and drama
- Think about opposites – volume loud and quiet
- Tempo (fast and slow)
- Pitch (high and low)
- Have a “big ending”

DON'T TRY THEM ALL AT ONCE !!!

Three articles

Humour Music and Creativity

It is what you do and it is the way you do it - on improvisation

Story and Song – from Music Educators and Researchers of Young Children conference 2017

Contact

email - steve.grocott@btinternet.com

<https://stevegrocott.bandcamp.com>