

9 Tinga Layo!

RESOURCES ▶ CD track 11 ▶ Warm ups: Nos. 15, 18, 20

Information

This is the kind of song that children love to listen to and sing themselves. I once heard it performed by a lovely, elderly West Indian woman as she worked with children at an arts workshop in Birmingham: gentle, rhythmic singing, communicating with her voice and manner the humour of the words. But equally, the ostinato clapped vigorously by a group of youngsters can have a stunning and stirring effect, transforming the song into something much livelier.

Starting

- Start by singing the chorus to the group (top line only where it divides) and getting them to sing it back. It's simple, with two phrases repeated, the second ending lower than the first.
- Fill in with the verse and ask singers to follow with the chorus. Sing the whole song: chorus—verse—chorus—verse—chorus, with the group joining in the choruses. It's catchy and the words are fun, and the singers will soon get the feel of the verse melody and the shape of the song.

Teaching and rehearsing

- Introduce the two-bar ostinato as a warm up to the next session by clapping it and singing to the words. This fits with both the refrain and verse of the song. Use your judgement as to when the group is ready to add this to the song.
- Teach the melody of the verse and point out its melodic shape: 876/765/654/543 and how the rhythm of the melody emphasizes certain words ('walk', 'talk', 'eat', 'fork').
- If you like, teach the second part in the chorus to a small group—simple thirds below the melody on 'Tinga Layo'.
- Once all the elements are learnt, go for a run-through to give shape to the song.

Ideas

- In the verses, a small group can echo and sing with the main choir—see ostinato line, bars 7–8. If preferred, the verse can be sung through twice each time before repeating the chorus, as on the CD.

- This can be a fully fledged number with backing rhythms and accompanying instruments, or is just as effective as a simple single line. In rehearsal, consider the different ways the song can be sung and how best to communicate changes to the structure by simple signals, for example:
 - ~ 'T' hand signal indicates singing the ostinato
 - ~ putting your hands together indicates clapping the ostinato.
- Colour the minims of 'La-yo' with a little idiomatic slide, as on the CD.
- Try adding a bass-line on tuned percussion: G–F#–E–D. Each note is worth two crotchet beats. This can accompany both chorus and verse.
- Consider adding other percussion effects. The ostinato could be played on claves or other dry percussion.
- Chords are provided for guitar accompaniment. The rhythm of the guitar might follow the ostinato pattern.

Listen out

- The 'pick up' for each verse is likely to catch out all but the most attentive, so make sure singers are ready to go on with the verse at the end of the chorus and breathe quickly.
- Check that words are always crisp and clear. Work on the vowel sounds of the refrain and make sure no diphthongs creep in: 'Teen-ga *Laer*-yo'.

Performing

- Settle on the final shape of the song as the performance approaches and whether any actions might be added. One arrangement might look like this:
 - ~ whole group sings the melody alone, chorus and first verse
 - ~ divide in two and add the lower-part harmony in the chorus
 - ~ introduce the ostinato, sung or clapped for verse 2 and final chorus
 - ~ the ostinato can be repeated to end.
- An alternative scheme is performed on the CD.

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Trad. West Indian
arr. Kevin Stannard

♩ = 112

D A D Chorus G D

Voices

Tin-ga La - yo!

Ostinato

Tin-ga La-yo, Tin-ga La-yo, come, lit-tle don-key come.

Bass-line

Fine

4 A D G D A D Verse

come, lit-tle don-key come; Tin-ga La - yo! come, lit-tle don-key come. 1. My don-key
2. My don-key

7 G D A D

walk, my don - key talk, my don - key eat with a spoon and fork. Tin - ga
eat, my don - key sleep, my don - key kick with his two hind feet.

(walk, (eat, talk, sleep, eat with a spoon and fork.) kick with his two hind feet.)