

9 Warm up and Stomp canon

RESOURCES ► CD track

Information

I wanted a way to begin warming up the voice and body without resorting to 'traditional' warm ups that may not be so suitable for young singers. So, I came up with this, in two parts—a stretching warm up with varying vocal qualities, and a very simple movement canon. When done together, they not only reinforce group listening skills but also maintain a strong steady pulse. This is an enjoyable, useful piece that can be used effectively with almost all age groups.

Starting

- Before you start to teach this piece, listen to the CD to get a feel for the fun voices.

Teaching and rehearsing

Warm up

- Teach this by rote, using the different vocal qualities (cowboy, posh, whisper, nasal) and doing the actions. Remember, changing the vocal qualities exercises the vocal folds.

Stomp Canon

- The easiest way to teach this is to gradually add each new activity so the piece becomes longer and longer:
 1. Count to eight in a steady pulse.
 2. Count to eight, then march/stomp for eight.
 3. Count to eight, march/stomp for eight, patsch for eight.
 4. Count to eight, march/stomp for eight, patsch for eight, clap for eight.
 5. Count to eight, march/stomp for eight, patsch for eight, clap for eight, click for eight.
 6. All the above and then a turn. There should be one turn taking eight counts to complete.
 7. All the above, then seven 'oo' (monkey) sounds and one loud 'yeah!' The 'oo' sounds should be loud and accompanied by jumping. This will need to be practised several times, and on the final 'yeah!' everyone should freeze with hands high.
- Once the piece is learnt, try doing it as a round. The second group begins after the first has finished counting.

Ideas

- The piano part is meant only to keep the pulse, so feel free to adapt it as you like; anything that keeps a steady beat will be fine.
- Try doing a 'bouncy' (bend knees) not just for the marching but while patsching, clapping, and clicking too. This will help to keep the pulse steady.
- Do just the movements (no vocals) to your favourite CD!
- The 'Warm up' can also be sung in a round, beginning after four bars. For older singers, try starting after two bars!

Listen out

- Take care over the nasal 'ee' sounds, and try to access a 'head voice' rather than produce a pinched and constricted sound. Keep the pitch within the spoken range—think wicked witch sounds!
- When stomping, the tendency will be for some of your group to jump or stomp so hard that they cannot keep a steady pulse. If this happens, or if you think it might happen, call it marching; this should keep things under control.
- The turn can be a bit silly, so you might want to try this with the group before adding the other elements. There will always be at least one child who will try to turn eight times!

Performing

- The first time this piece was performed it was done over two evenings by almost 1,000 singers. We used it as the opening piece for a concert, done first in unison and then in four parts. Not only was it a great way to settle in the singers and warm them up, but, as it's visually fun, it relaxed the audience and prepared everyone for the evening. Sometimes I even repeat it as a closing piece and get the audience to join in! Again, this is a piece to consider using for your entire school as a good way to start an assembly and get those voices working before moving on to other group songs. Also, by starting with this your group will get rid of some of the fidgets and nervous energy all age groups can have.

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Words and music by
Jo McNally

Warm up

With attitude ♩ = 120

Shoulders up, down, forward, back ...

mf (Cowboy voice)

... and an up and a down and a

The first system of music consists of three measures. The vocal line starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note 'and', a quarter note 'up', a quarter note 'and', a quarter note 'down', and a quarter note 'and'. The piano accompaniment features a steady 4/4 rhythm with chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

4 (*)

for-ward and a back and an up and a down and a for-ward and a back and a -

The second system continues the warm-up with measures 4, 5, and 6. The vocal line follows the same pattern: 'for-ward and a back and an up and a down and a for-ward and a back and a -'. The piano accompaniment remains consistent with the first system.

7 (*)

Circle shoulders ...
(Posh voice)

Flick hands left, right ...
p (Whisper)

- round, and a-round. This way, - and that way, - and

The third system covers measures 7, 8, and 9. The vocal line includes the instruction 'Circle shoulders ... (Posh voice)' and 'Flick hands left, right ... (Whisper)'. The lyrics are '- round, and a-round. This way, - and that way, - and'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

10

Touch knees ...

this way, - and that way, touch your knees, touch your knees.

The fourth system covers measures 10, 11, and 12. The vocal line includes the instruction 'Touch knees ...'. The lyrics are 'this way, - and that way, touch your knees, touch your knees.'. The piano accompaniment features a steady 4/4 rhythm with chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

13 *Make 'evil' fingers!*
mf (Nasal voice)

Musical score for 'Make evil fingers!'. The vocal line consists of a series of eighth notes with the syllable 'ee' repeated. The piano accompaniment features chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand.

17 *Swing arms like skiing*
 (Loud air sound)

Musical score for 'Swing arms like skiing'. The vocal line consists of a series of 'sh' sounds. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

Stomp canon

21 *f*

1.-6.	*	last time	<i>Hands held high</i>
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Musical score for 'Stomp canon'. The vocal line includes a list of instructions and a series of 'oo' sounds. The piano accompaniment features chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

- Count 1
- Stomp x8
- Patsch x8
- Clap x8
- Click x8
- Turn (over 8 counts)
- Jump and say 'oo' x7

oo oo oo Yeah!