

Composing Using Rhythm - Toolkit

The Numbers Game

The Numbers game can easily be turned into a fun piece.

Step 1: Ask everyone to choose their own two numbers between 1 and 8. (Let's choose 2 and 5)

Step 2: Pick a note for each of your numbers (You can limit the notes to five if you wish -C, D, E, G, A)

– Let's choose C for number 2 and G for number 5

Step 3: The leader starts a steady pulse and repeats the numbers 12345678.

Step 4: Everyone plays one note on their first number and the second note on the second number. (C for 2 and G for 5).

This is your **Chorus**, where everyone is playing at the same time.

Then you can enjoy making up the **changes**.

Changes can include:

Just your first number

Just your second number

If you have long hair

Clap your second numbers

Just Odd numbers

Just even numbers

First 4 numbers

Last 4 numbers

Left side of the room

Right side of the room

The Newspaper Game

This game works with any original source material, but when we played it we used fruits as the starting point.

Grab a paper, pick some words, get into groups and then turn them into music. It's as simple as that. However, it also works with a given topic. So, let's use the wonderful world of Alice In Wonderland.

Here are our words:

Group 1: "Caterpillar sits on a simple toadstool"

Group 2: "Mad as a hatter"

Group 3: "Grin as wide as a Cheshire Cat"

Group 4: "Tweedledee and Tweedledum"

Split into 4 groups; each group has a phrase. Use the natural rhythms of the words ("Mad as a hatter") and add some drama (Maybe "Tweedledum and Tweedledee" can bob up and down, or Group 1 could create a huge human caterpillar).

Bring the groups together and turn "Alice and Wonderland" into a short repeated pattern. This *Ostinato* (repeated pattern) is your chorus.

You can structure as you wish.

Hey presto! You have a piece.

Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba

There's a recording of this to remind you.

Start with the Ba rhythm as a chorus, and then give the children the opportunities for solos in between. Depending on time, you can:

Have a solo between each chorus

Group the children so you have a trio, quartet etc at a time.

Have solos, but they go into each other so you only play the chorus $\frac{3}{4}$ times.

January, February, March,

There should be a recording of this. Everyone learns the tune, then plays their drum on their birthday month. Once everybody gets what they are doing, you remove the tune, and then have a set new rhythm.

This works with any tune, where there can be a choice involved (months, numbers, favourite colours etc).