

Canon Corner

Boat round in three for third grade



By Toss Aaron

Canons and rounds about boats have been recorded since 1453, when the first Lord Mayor of London asked to be rowed with music and great pomp down the

Thames River to take office. His boatmen sang a round as they rowed. Then John Jenkins (1592-1687) wrote this round, popular in Renaissance England, and it is still sung today.

Note: There is a suggested change in the lyric of the third phrase, but consideration of authenticity will depend on the individual school, grade and situation.

A boat, a boat, haste to the ferry,
And we'll cross over and be merry,
And laugh, and quaff, and drink
old sherry.
(or "And laugh and sing aboard the
ferry.")

1. Because of its melodic appeal and comparative simplicity, learning and singing the round could come first, with linking activities added and surrounding it at another time.
2. Teach this phrase by phrase aurally, and repeat the whole several times

in unison, varying the dynamics and tempo. The goal is to have the class sing it independently, well and exactly together.

3. Note any instinctive swaying to the three-pulse, a response that proves internalization, and that can be developed into movement activities. Encourage free gestures with swinging arms, or with knee bends up and down, like waves. How can a small group of six students show they are all riding the same ferry boat? Where is it going?
4. Another day, try to sing the first two parts together, acknowledging students' delight with the close harmony. Write the two-part score on the board staff in two colors, even if the class is not yet literate. The visual design can be appealing.
5. When two parts are secure, the class can hum while the teacher introduces and sings the more extended third voice. Alternatively, this can be played on alto recorder. Teach the third part, pointing out its scale pattern.
6. Start a lesson with echo clapping of two measure patterns in three, including those found in the canon:



7. Pass a second hand drum around a seated circle so that every student has a chance to imitate the patterns of the teacher. This is most effective without talking or undermining confidence by commenting on errors. If there should be many, repeat the "game" often to build security. Find other songs and rhymes in three.
8. Related/classroom activities: On a map, find where ferry boats still sail in the United States or Canada. Have any students been on ferries? Compare other boat canons and sing other boat songs, such as: "Row Your Boat," "My Paddle's Keen and Bright," and "The Boatmen Row." Help students share experiences of being in any kind of boat: rowboat, sailboat, canoe, rubber raft or cruise ship. Does anyone know how to make a little paper boat? For a ferry song with setting, see *The Orff Echo*, Spring 1989.

A Boat! A Boat!

John Jenkins 1592-1687
Lyrics adapted by T.A.

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