

Canon corner



Tossí Aaron

Along with our language, the British Isles has given us the gift of an extensive source for American traditional song and dance. It's said the lyrics of this canon are from a sign in British diesel trains, about 1955. A red chain looped along the inside walls of the passenger coaches. When pulled, it broke the vacuum seal on the brake system, slowing and stopping the train.

Exploration

How much is five pounds in American money? What emergencies might cause the chain to be pulled? Is there such a device on American trains? A cord appears on American urban buses and trolleys, but it only signals the conductor when a passenger wishes to get

Train Canon from England

Traditional

off. What kind of sign might be found on a contemporary bus to prevent misuse?

Preparation

Explore ways to make the sounds of old-fashioned train wheels. Try sand blocks, guiro, saying "clickety-clack," or found sounds, such as rhythmic shuffling of alternating feet while sitting down. Find a way to imitate a train whistle. Is there a small wooden one in the collection of non-pitched instruments? Would a slide whistle be effective?

Suggestions

Before singing in canon, help students create a brief dramatization to the song. Share or draw train ride experiences. Frame an introduction, perhaps a chanted list of local train stops or railroad companies, as part of a rondo. Add train sounds or an "All aboard!" Sing in three parts, then explore other entrances. Do the

words and harmony remain clear? Should there be percussion accents, or instrumental ostinati, or a coda after the last voice fades out? On what note might the voices end together?

For recorders

Played on recorders in G, this avoids F# and offers valuable left hand practice. If octave Ds present a challenge to get clean, accurately timed finger placement, have half the class play the high D, half the low D, in tempo. Pairs of students can work together, trade, then play both notes.

For further train songs and activities, see "Down by the Station" in Orff Schulwerk, American Edition Book Two.

Correction

In the "Derry Ding Dong Dason" canon featured in the summer issue, the asterisk should be over the beginning of the new measure, not over the last note of the previous one.

To Stop the Train

Traditional

To stop the train in ca-ses of e-mer-gen-cy Pull down the cha--in

Pull down the cha--in Pen-al-ty for im-pro-per use, five pounds.