

"Nothing Grooves Like a Deere" from *Symphony On A Stick* – Ostinato Lesson Plan

National Music Standards (2014)

Artistic Process	Creating
Anchor Standard 1	Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
Enduring Understanding	The creative ideas, concepts, and feelings that influence musicians' work emerge from a variety of sources.

Learning Target

The student will improvise (*imagine*) rhythmic ideas for an express purpose.

Lesson Plan

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials:

Audio excerpt recording of "Nothing Grooves Like a Deere" from *Symphony On A Stick*

Visuals of five 4-beat rhythm patterns (i.e., Unit 1 cards from Feierabend's *Conversational Solfege*) enough for each small group

A variety of unpitched percussion instruments (triangles, rhythm sticks, hand drums, tambourines and maracas)

Excerpt of the score for "Nothing Grooves Like a Deere"

John Deere tractor photo

https://www.deere.co.in/en_IN/products/equipment/tractors/tractors.page

John Deere tractor engine photo

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John_Deere_3350_tractor_cut_engine.JPG

John Deere 1949 Model Starting and Running

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+old+john+deere+tractor+motor+running&view=detail&mid=00D1AEFAFBACAA87818800D1AEFAFBACAA878188&FORM=VIRE>

Warmup: As students enter the room, play "Nothing Grooves Like a Deere" excerpt from *Symphony On A Stick*.

Teacher wordlessly leads students in following body percussion movement (at least 16 beats for each pattern):

- Pat lap on macro beat (strong beat)
- Switch to clapping 8th-8th quarter note 8th-8th quarter note
- Switch to stepping half note quarter note quarter note
- Divide class into 3 groups; assign each one of the rhythm patterns and practice, each group alone
- Layer each group's rhythm patterns until they are simultaneously performing

Direct Instruction: Discuss/label ostinati in non-musical and musical sources

“We just performed rhythms as repeated patterns. Musicians call a pattern that is repeated an OSTINATO.”

Show a portion of the score for “Nothing Grooves Like a Deere.” Identify the repeated rhythm patterns or ostinati, and name the instruments that play them (clarinets, bassoon, tuba and percussion instruments). Have students read any of the rhythms with which they are familiar.

“Composer Peter Hamlin wrote a piece of music about the Iowa State Fair called *Symphony On A Stick*. This is one of the parts of his symphony titled *Nothing Grooves Like a Deere*. Do you know what the title is about?” Explain that John Deere is the name of a tractor manufactured in Iowa.

Show a photo of a John Deere tractor (see materials list for web address) and then the tractor engine. Show the YouTube video of a working engine. Point out the sound of a repeated rhythmic pattern.

“Why do you think the composer used ostinato patterns in music about a John Deere tractor?”

Guided practice: “Today you will work with others in a small group to create your own music using ostinato patterns. Here are some examples of rhythm patterns you may use.”

Display the visuals of rhythm patterns known to the students (i.e., quarter notes, quarter rests and paired eighth notes). *Each of the five patterns should be duplicated for the number of groups working together.*

Have students choose a pattern and read it while performing it on body percussion. Assign it to a percussion instrument

Ex. Quarter note quarter note 8th-8th quarter note

- 1) Perform by patting lap
- 2) Play on hand drum

Repeat this process until there are three ostinato patterns performing simultaneously.

Independent practice: Choose groups; there should be 5-6 students per group. “Here are the guidelines to remember while creating your ostinato piece.”

- 1) ALL members of the group will participate
- 2) From the five rhythm patterns provided, choose THREE you will use to create your ostinato piece
- 3) Read each pattern out loud and practice it using body percussion (snap, pat, clap, step)
- 4) Choose a percussion instrument to play each rhythm pattern
- 5) One student is the CONDUCTOR – he/she is responsible for cuing each player (when to start playing) and stopping the players
- 6) Begin with one pattern performing and add one at a time
- 7) Conductor decides when to stop

FORM for performance

Perform rhythm patterns with body percussion

Perform rhythm patterns with unpitched percussion

Assessment:

Informal – “three stars and a wish” – after each group performs, have their classmates volunteer three things that the group did well, either in planning or performance, and one thing that could have been better

Formal – Teacher uses the following rubric:

4 – Yes

3 – Yes, but one element was missing

2 – No, but some elements were present

1 – No

Areas of Assessment

Participation

Accuracy of rhythm pattern

Choice of body percussion and instrument

Cooperation with others

Sources:

Conversational Solfege, Level I (Feierabend) GIA Publishing