

Title: Square off with unusual meter

A music-based unit derived from the Music Starters Template: **Unsquare Dance**

Starting Point:

Unsquare Dance

The musical score for 'Unsquare Dance' is presented in three systems, each with three staves: Melody (treble clef), Alto (treble clef), and Bass (bass clef). The time signature is 7/4. The first system includes lyrics: 'A A G E D E D E A A G E D E D E' for the Melody, 'C'E' C'E' C'E' C'E' C'E' C'E' C'E' C'E' for the Alto, and 'A G A A G A' for the Bass. The second system includes lyrics: 'D' D' C' A G A G A A A G E D E D E' for the Melody, 'FA FA FA FA C'E' C'E' C'E' C'E' for the Alto, and 'D C D A G A' for the Bass. The third system includes lyrics: 'B B A G E G E B A' for the Melody, 'GB GB GB GB C'E' C'E' C'E' C'E' A E A for the Alto, and 'E D E A G A A A E A' for the Bass. The score includes first and second endings and a repeat sign.

arranged David Turner

Generative topic:

Working with unusual meter

Rewritten as a question:

What are the challenges of working in 7/4 time?

Overview:

Students will listen to and perform Dave Brubeck's *Unsquare Dance* and participate in class ensemble work incorporating movement, rhythmic and melodic improvisation, vocal work, solo and group performance.

Intended grades: 5/6

Standards: 3-4

Duration: 3 x 45 minute lessons

Connections with Cognitive, Personal and Social Development:

- Understands the ways in which arts forms communicate for different purposes, audiences and contexts
- Understands how to select and use appropriate methodologies to identify relevant questions and plan and carry out discipline-based investigations
- Understands how to use particular thinking and problem-solving strategies, recognising that emotions, motivations and beliefs of themselves and others influence the process of making choices
- Understands how to explore, refine and communicate more effective ways of thinking and acting mathematically in familiar situations
- Understands the scope of personal choice in weighing up competing factors when making wellbeing decisions for themselves and others in their immediate environment
- Understands that whilst difference enriches culture, it may lead to misunderstandings which can be resolved by individual and group action
- Understands the processes through which individuals and groups work together to achieve a personal and shared goal

Throughlines	Understanding goals
Music has structure.	1. 7/4 time is a combination of duple and triple time.
Music can have an unusual meter.	
Playing music is challenging, satisfying and fun.	

This unit makes provision for:

- ✓ establishment and consolidation of prior learning
- ✓ whole class activity
- ✓ small group activity
- ✓ individual activity
- ✓ guided / scaffolded inquiry
- ✓ self-assessment
- ✓ peer-assessment
- ✓ independent student demonstration of understanding.

Development of understanding of these concepts:

Concept	Specific aspects
	Students can:
✓ Beat	maintain a steady beat in 7/4 time
✓ Rhythm	perform syncopated rhythms
✓ Meter	develop a feel for 7/4 time
Tempo	
✓ Melody	recognise a melodic sequence
✓ Harmony	follow a 1 4 5 progression
Tonality	
Dynamics	
Tone Colour	
✓ Texture	experiment with layering of un-tuned percussion instruments
✓ Structure	recognise patterns and sequences in the music first and second time endings
✓ Style / Context	appreciate that blues / jazz style is used as a medium to reinforce unusual meter.

Development of these skills:

Skill	Specific aspects
	Students can:
✓ Vocal	perform vocal and speech chants
✓ Instrumental	play simple melodies on barred instruments or recorders play easy guitar chords perform simple I IV V bass sequence on barred instruments perform body percussion in duple and triple groupings
✓ Movement	create movement appropriate to the style of the piece
✓ Reading Notation	read a simple score using standard music notation and recognise syncopated rhythm patterns
Writing Notation	
✓ Listening / Aural Discrimination	recognise syncopated rhythm patterns Recognise the I IV v chord progression recognise musical cues
✓ Improvising	undertake rhythmic improvisation on un-tuned percussion instruments undertake melodic improvisation on A la pentatonic scale
Composing	
✓ Arranging / Transcribing	reach a consensus about entry and exit points for each section, layering, improvisations, melody playing etc.
✓ Commenting	evaluate performances.

Warming up / Tuning in: engaging the students in the inquiry

UGs	Learning experiences	Ongoing assessment and feedback
	Students listen to the recording and attempt to define the meter, or find the first beat of the bar (movement or body percussion may assist in this task).	Student comments and observations
	Working in groups students create hand-clapping, body percussion patterns or dance movements to demonstrate the duple and triple groupings of 7/4 meter.	Self-assessment and peer-assessment of cooperative group activity

Guided / scaffolded inquiry: enabling students to acquire, process and represent information, to further develop understanding and challenge thinking

UGs	Learning experiences	Ongoing assessment and feedback
1	Students identify the I IV V chord progressions.	Observe and record student competencies.
1	Students transfer these patterns to tuned percussion instruments or guitars.	
1	Students add appropriate un-tuned percussion patterns.	Students evaluate the effectiveness of their patterns and performances.
1	Teach the melody, getting students to echo one phrase at a time. Transfer onto instruments.	Students identify melodic sequences.
1	Practise rhythmic and melodic improvisation (A la pentatonic scale).	Students demonstrate simple improvisation examples.
1	Explain the role of a coda in a musical piece and practise the coda.	Students identify codas in other samples of music.
1	Create a performance structure.	Students articulate why a performance structure is important and how they would create one.

Culminating performances: enabling students to demonstrate insights and demonstrate their understanding

UGs	Learning experiences	Ongoing assessment and feedback
1	Identify other examples of 7/4 or 5/4 meter.	Vary the performance structure to highlight different sections and student skills.
1	Incorporate a movement sequence into the performance structure.	Students evaluate the success of conveying unusual meter through their performance.

Tips for teachers

Take time to firmly consolidate the 7/4 meter as some students will tend to revert back to quadruple meter.

It is possible to vary the scaffolded inquiry process to suit individual teachers' and students' needs.

Allow students the opportunity to experiment with improvisation in a large group before expecting individual performances.

Resources and references

Money by Pink Floyd

Take five by Dave Brubeck

Everything's all right now – from *Jesus Christ Superstar*

Musica Viva in Schools Program – Xenos 2004

Living in the Past by Jethro Tull

Five to three **Good Timing 2**

5 / 4 Groove; Seven Boomerang Jam by Susie Davies-Splitter