

Inside the Music: A Midsummer Night's Dream Teacher's Resources

Part 3: Playing as an Ensemble

Overview

- This section is all about ensemble playing – or playing together as an orchestra.
- Your students will learn about the role of a conductor, and what it means when orchestras play without one – this is known as a chamber orchestra.
- Your students will explore the musicianship skills required when playing without a conductor.

Before you start

- Check the body percussion that was learned in [Video 1](#) (you'll only need the first half of the video).
- If possible, find a big enough space for students to spread apart from each other and to move about.

Exercise length: 30 minutes (5 minutes per exercise)

Activity set-up: group task

Materials required: none / classroom instruments (optional)

Musical learning: playing together; playing in time

During the Exercise

- Recap the body percussion exercise as needed before you separate into this exercise.
- Pause the video between the exercises and let your students have a go:
 - Standing close together, counting each other in;
 - Standing close together, not counting each other in (using a breath to start);
 - Back-to-back, using a breath to start – they should feel the breath;
 - Spread out across the room – the further apart, the more challenging and fun!
- Pupils should be playing in unison (at the same time), finding different ways to start together.
- Watch out for very successful pairs, and ask them to demonstrate to the rest of the class. Invite the rest of the class to comment on what's working well – focus the discussion around ways that they are communicating.

Finishing the Session

- Have a discussion about the exercises. You might like to think about:
 - How does distance affect our ability to play in unison? Why might that be harder?
 - Is one person leading, or are you doing it together?

Extension Exercises

- Invite pairs to create their own (short) body percussion phrase, and lead each other in.
- Try the exercises using classroom percussion.