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## To Drum or Not To Drum... THAT is the Question!

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### Percussion in Orff Schulwerk

Carl Orff extensively used percussion instruments as he was developing the Schulwerk. Much of the process involves putting the rhythms into the body via movement or body percussion and then transferring the rhythms to the percussion instruments themselves. Speech (a key element of the Orff Schulwerk process) is also used to teach rhythms and as a basis for improvisation and composition.

### Keetman's "Rhythmic Building Bricks"

In her book, *Elementaria*, Gunild Keetman classifies the "rhythmic building bricks" as "patterns in two-four time (that) form the rhythmic foundation for the first stages of teaching." Keetman determined the use of two-four meter as a starting point since most of these basic rhythmic units are derived from children's rhymes, songs, and names (See *Elementaria*, page 17).



### Possible Speech:

apple	cantaloupe	strawberry	watermelon	peach
monkey	elephant	anteater	alligator	bear

### What are some possibilities for using the rhythmic building bricks?

- ◆ Echo Patterns (Remember that any rhythms not accurately reproduced by nearly all students should be repeated until correct.)
- ◆ Question and Answer
- ◆ Ostinato patterns to be used for accompanying melodies
- ◆ Basis for improvisation and composition

Keep in mind that when using the rhythmic building bricks with younger students, substituting icons for the rhythms is completely acceptable. However, this does not mean that reading and notating music is not an integral part of the Schulwerk! Carl Orff stated "the teacher should nevertheless instruct (children) in musical notation right from the beginning, starting with speech exercises where only rhythmic notation is necessary" (Introduction to *Music for Children*, Volume I, Murray edition).

## "Lunch Time" (based on *Music for Children, Volume I* page 56 #3)

- T recites rhyme while S clap on all the boxed words—continue process until S are able to recite rhyme and clap on all boxed words
- S recite rhyme, patting the rhythm (pat boxed words on knees)
- Transfer to drum
- T demos low drum rhythm—S imitate—divide class into two groups and play both parts—switch
- Repeat process with high drum part
- Add steady beat on cowbell
- T demonstrates gankogui part—S imitate
- Combine all parts (rotate drum circle until all S have had a chance to play all parts)
- Display rhythm building bricks—S brainstorm lunch menu items for each rhythm

### EXAMPLE:



hot dog	onion rings	hamburger	garden salad	milk
green beans	mac & cheese	sub sandwich	chili cheese fries	fruit

- In groups of 4-6, S use rhythm building bricks to create two complimentary ostinati patterns
- S decide on final form

# Lunch Time

Score

Michelle Barnes  
Based on Music for Children (Murray ed.), Volume 1 page 56 #3

The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems of four measures each. The instruments are arranged from top to bottom: Cowbell, Gankogui, High Drum, Medium Drum, and Low Drum. The lyrics are written below the Gankogui and Medium Drum staves.

**System 1:**

- Cowbell:** Four measures of quarter notes.
- Gankogui:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns.
- High Drum:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns.
- Medium Drum:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns.
- Low Drum:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns.
- Lyrics:**  
Measure 1: I want \_\_\_ to eat right now!  
Measure 2: I don't know!  
Measure 3: I think I'm going to faint!  
Measure 4: Help me!

**System 2:**

- Cowbell:** Four measures of quarter notes.
- Gankogui:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns.
- High Drum:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns.
- Medium Drum:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns.
- Low Drum:** Four measures of eighth-note patterns.
- Lyrics:**  
Measure 1: Got-ta eat! I can't wait!  
Measure 2: Can't you hear my bel-ly ache?  
Measure 3: Got-ta eat! I can't wait  
Measure 4: What's for lunch to-day?

What's for lunch to-day? What's for lunch to - day? What's for lunch to - day? What's for lunch to-day?