

I GOT RHYTHM

George Gershwin/Ira Gershwin (arr. by Owain Gethin Davies)



ABOUT THIS SONG

This is a song from the musical 'Crazy for you', and was published in 1930. Its chord progression, known as the 'rhythm changes', is the foundation for many other popular jazz tunes.

THEMES/SUBJECTS

Musical/pentatonic/syncopation

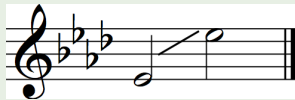
CURRICULUM KEY LINKS

Languages, Literacy & Communication
Expressive Arts

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Vocal range

An 8th



Vocal format

Unison/independent parts

Musical elements

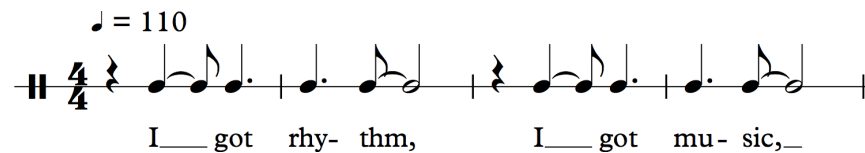
Texture and structure

Musical characteristics

Unison and three-part harmony, verse and chorus structure

Warm-up Exercises

- Stand with your feet apart, and both arms loosely by your side. Ask learners to breathe in and blow out deeply, placing both hands first on their ribs at the side, and then on their lower backs. Learners should be able to feel the movement all round. If you have the space, repeat this exercise with learners lying on the floor to see if it feels the same. The breathing requires control from the whole of the upper body.
- Balance on one leg and rotate the other leg in a circular motion, starting with the ankles, then the knees and finally the hip. Do this clockwise, and then anticlockwise. Repeat with the other leg.
- Ask learners to hum a siren, moving up and down in pitch, following your hand signal from high up in the air to low down by your knees.
- Demonstrate the characteristic rhythm of the song:



Suggested key links with other Areas, cross-cutting themes &/or local, national and international contexts

- Explore the origins and history of jazz music.
- Listen to a range of popular jazz standards.
- What chord progressions are synonymous with jazz music?
- What characteristics give pieces the distinctly 'jazz' sound?

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Teaching and learning

- 1 Play the recording or sing the melody (Part 1) of the chorus (bars 3 to 18). While listening, learners should focus on the step and leap movement and syncopated rhythms in the melody, and attempt to clap the rhythm.
- 2 Perform the verse in unison with the recording, reminding learners to sing through all the phrases and ensure that the quality of the sound and diction doesn't deteriorate when singing the short syncopated rhythms.
- 3 If learners are able to maintain their parts, move on to the verse (bars 20 to 44). Ask all learners to listen to a recording and focus on the entry point of each phrase. Ask learners to clap the rhythm while they listen.
- 4 Begin with Part 1, as this is the main melody; make sure learners follow the melodic line accurately. Make sure that the quality of the sound and diction doesn't deteriorate when singing the short rhythms.
- 5 Move on to Parts 2 and 3 of the chorus, which includes mainly repetition and small leap movement. Give plenty of support to the learners singing the harmony parts, as it will be challenging to maintain this part when rehearsing with the melody.
- 6 When all learners are confident with Parts 2 and 3 in the chorus, divide the class into three equal groups, one for each part.
- 7 Try to perform the three parts together, with or without the recording. If learners struggle with a specific phrase, ask them to listen to you or the track and then join in. Change the parts around, so that everyone has an opportunity to sing all parts.
- 8 You may find that learning the first verse in unison and the chorus in harmony is enough for one session, and decide to tackle the harmony parts in the verse in the following session.
- 9 Introduce the harmony parts (Parts 2 and 3) in the verse to all learners. Work through the verse, making sure learners follow the lyrics accurately and observe the changes in pitch.
- 10 When all learners are confident with the lyrics and harmony parts in the first verse, rehearse both verse and chorus thoroughly and try to perform with the recording.

Integral Skills

- Try to perform the last chorus (which is in a new key, A Major) in three parts without any accompaniment, to encourage learners to listen carefully to the sound of the harmony. The words need to be very clear, with strong consonants and focused vowels.
- Try to vary the dynamics in the performance. For example, sing the first chorus piano (quiet), and then mezzo forte (quite loud) in the verse. Include a crescendo (gradually get louder) through the second chorus and sing forte (loud) in the last chorus.
- Give opportunities for learners to break away from their lines in short bursts in the chorus, to create some harmonies or to add a few stepping notes. Learners will feel much safer if improvising in larger numbers. Give plenty of support, and don't expect all learners to develop and perform their ideas in an instant!

GRADING: CHALLENGING

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Statements of what matters:

**Exploring the expressive arts is essential to developing artistic skills and knowledge and it enables learners to become curious and creative individual*

**Creating combines skills and knowledge, drawing on the senses, inspiration and imagination*

- In small groups, learners could use the lyrics and rhythm of the chorus to compose a new melody. Using the pentatonic scale in C (CDEGA), they should aim to include one leap and move elsewhere by step in each phrase. They should also be encouraged to think about the pitch shape of each phrase (rising/falling/rainbow shape).
- An instrumental recording of this song was released by Louis Armstrong and his band in 1938. Ask learners to listen to and appraise this recording and discuss its main characteristics and features. Learners could also compare this with the original version of the song from the musical 'Crazy for you'.

Assessment for Learning:

**Responding and reflecting, both as artist and audience, is a fundamental part of learning in the expressive arts*

Questioning

Tool: Big question

- In your opinion, was this song easy or difficult to learn?
- What are your reasons?
- Is there a different point of view within the group? If so, why?

Feedback

Tool: Instant feedback

Give learners instant feedback during the teaching and learning process; feedback could be on their ability to maintain their part when singing in parts. Following the learning process, give feedback on learners' ability to respond to your hand directions when changing the dynamic levels.

Self- and peer assessment

Tool: Learner-to-learner dialogue

Ask learners to take it in turns to be the teacher when discussing the performance and asking questions. You may need to give some suggestions of possible questions, for example:

- Was Part 1, Part 2 or Part 3 the hardest to learn? Why?
- What do you like singing the most – the melody or harmony lines (Part 2 and Part 3)? Why?