

Cobbler Cobbler Mend my Shoe

an illustration of Kodaly teaching by Len Tyler

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s s m m s s m s s m m s s m

Cob - ble cob - bler mend my shoe, get it done by half past two.

s s m m s s m s s m m s s m

Half past two is much too late, get it done by half past eight.

Cobbler Cobbler is a traditional children's song that is ideal for introducing children to the basics of music reading. The technical content is quite simple and as a result this song lends itself well to teaching basic musical elements to children. Before any musical element can be extracted at a conscious level the song needs to be learned thoroughly first ensuring that the unconscious performance of the various elements is done accurately and with good quality. With this in mind the following activities can be used to help establish this song.

1. **Sing the song for its own sake.** Possibly the most important activity of all. A good song will always do well with the children if it has quality and depth.
2. **Sing the song while the children hammer one fist onto another to a crotchet (Ta) pulse.** (Banging in big nails)
The children can be told that this is the pulse of the song and can be linked to the heartbeat. In people (or animals) the heartbeat can be fast or slow but is usually constant. The same goes for the heartbeat of a song. Sometimes fast, sometimes slow, but it usually remains constant.

3. Sing the song while the children hammer one fist onto another to a quaver (Te-te) pulse. (Banging in little nails)

4. Children walk round the room to a Ta pulse while singing the song. It is not so easy for very young children to keep their feet in time with the music initially.

5. Sing the song while clapping the rhythm (words) of the song. Make sure that there is a clap for every syllable in the song, and just one clap on the last note of each line.

6. Sing the song while walking the pulse and clapping the rhythm. Care must be taken here to ensure that the different elements are performed accurately.

7. Sing the song while half of the children hammer the pulse (Ta) and half clap the rhythm. This activity is good for two-part hearing and general ensemble work. There can be many variations on this idea.

8. Repeat item 7 and change roles at a given signal

9. Clap the rhythm of the song while silently mouthing the words. This activity helps to develop the internal hearing and musical imagination of the children. They should be hearing the song in their minds during this activity.

10. Sing the song in canon. This works at virtually any interval. If done at one beat interval the sound of the two notes together creates a pleasing effect. This is not so easy for younger children.

Be imaginative and creative. There are lots of other activities that can be done with this or any other good song. Don't be afraid to experiment or ask the children for ideas.