

# SmashBeats

## TODAY'S ACTIVITY

### 4. Multi-Layered Rhythms

#### WHO IS THIS ACTIVITY FOR?

Students in years 5 - 7

#### WHO CAN LEAD THIS ACTIVITY?

Music specialist or instrumental teacher

#### WHAT WILL STUDENTS LEARN?

How to play a part within a polyrhythmic piece using rhythms based on words

#### WHAT DO WE NEED?

- Tuned / untuned instruments

### THE ACTIVITY

Choose a topic and ask learners to suggest a variety of words linked to the topic. The teacher should try to generate some interesting words, preferably with several syllables and with different stresses. For instance:

#### Football teams



Chelsea



Liverpool



West Bromwich Albion



Tottenham Hotspur

Divide the class into groups of about 4. Give each group a different word. Ask the students to use a mixture of body percussion (claps, stamps, clicks etc.) to match their word and its rhythm. Get the whole class to maintain a steady beat (e.g. by stepping from one foot to the other in time.) Get each group of students to play their body percussion rhythm to the rest of the class, repeating it several times, whilst the rest of the class maintains the beat. Get the rest of the class to evaluate each rhythm and suggest possible improvements.

The teacher builds up layers, starting with just one group's rhythm and gradually adding others. Rhythms can be stopped and started as many times as the teacher wants to create a multi-layered piece.

Ask the groups of students to move their body percussion rhythms onto instruments. If learners are using tuned instruments they should only use the sounding notes D, E, F sharp, A and B. (Players do not have to use all the notes e.g. this will allow beginner string players to just use open strings D, A and E.) The teacher may also indicate dynamics.

#### Extension:

Add rhythms that start on an anacrusis (upbeat) e.g. Southampton



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### 4. Multi-Layered Rhythms

*(Continued)*

#### WHAT WILL WE ASSESS?

- Students will know that different words have different numbers of syllables and different stresses that can be used to create rhythms
- Students will know how to play a repeated body percussion rhythm pattern within a whole class ensemble, reacting to a conductor's directions
- Students will know how to play a repeated rhythm pattern using a limited range of pitched notes on instruments within a whole class ensemble, reacting to a conductor's directions