SIMPLE WAYS OF USING PERCUSSION SOUNDS TO BRIGHTEN UP THE SINGING LESSON

LEONG YOON PIN

Do you find your singing lessons suffering from lack of tonal variety? Do you wish to make your children produce a greater variety of sound colours so that the ear may learn to discover, recognise and appreciate the quality of each kind of sound performed singly or in combination with others? If the answer is yes, then you may wish to adopt or adapt some of the following for your singing lessons.

(A) Body Sounds

Clapping of hands in verse 1,
Slapping of knees in verse 2,
Tapping toes in verse 3, as in the song, “Everyone Clap Hands With Me”.

Where body movements are not suggested by the words of the song, a suitable underlying rhythmic pattern may be detected or devised such as the weak-strong crotchet movement in “Lenggang Kangkong”.

(1) Ev’ryone clap hands with me (Clap, Clap)
(2) slap knees with me (Slap, Slap)
(3) tap toes with me (Tap, Tap)
Using Percussion Sounds to Brighten Up the Singing Lesson

This can be performed with a variety of body sounds – clapping, stamping, finger snapping, tapping of tabletop or other kinds of furniture surface.

(B) **Metal Sounds**

Playing Chinese or Gamelan gongs softly in the last six bars of "How Lovely is the Evening" in place of "Ding dong, Ding dong, Ding dong".

Using the tonic and dominant notes or simply high dominant ostinato to accompany Schubert’s "Slumber Song".

Playing the triangle on every first beat of the bar in the second part of "Di-Tanjong Katong" or "Little White Boat" ("Xiao Bai Chuan").

Playing the Indian Bells or Ring-bells in any noisy rhythm throughout the second part of the "Skater's Waltz".
Using the cymbals to play an off-beat quaver and crotchet rhythm in the song, "Counting the Toads" ("Shu Ha Ma").

(C) Wooden Sounds
Playing the Chinese double woodbox in quick quaver movement to simulate horse trotting in the song, "My Horse".

Playing two-part xylophone chords in four quavers followed by a crotchet rhythm throughout the first part of the song, "Ayo Mamma".

Using a set of angklungs (one octave D. to D in G major) to play the last phrase of "Senjakala" in two parts.
Accompanying “Kapur Sirih” with coconut shells in tango rhythm.

(D) Sounds Made On Skin Membrane
Playing tambourines or hand drums in quaver movement accenting the first in every group of four quavers in “Dance of Youth” (“Qingchun Wuqu”).

(E) Stone Sounds
Using stones or shells to play a simple two-bar rhythm in “Lift Up Your Veil” (“Xianqi nidi Gaitou lai”)

Most of the songs referred to in this article can be found in the Music Making series, published by the Educational Publications Bureau.