

## SPEECH CANONS

Proverbs can be an extremely useful source of material for canons of the 'round' type. They often have an interesting in-built rhythmic structure and can also be adapted to fit different time units. They can be used in very simple ways, or, by introducing rests and non-vocal sounds and creating less usual phrase lengths they can be made extremely sophisticated.

As is usual with Orff work the ideas given here are meant as suggestions that show some ways in which this kind of material can be treated.

Whatever version is used in the end, be sure that the words are 'alive' and enjoy the contrasting textures!

In the versions given here the notes with stems pointing upwards represent the rhythm to which the words are spoken, and the other notes represent sounds that could be made by claps or snaps etc. The asterisks show where the second entry could come, but try some other places too – 2a and 3a would be effective with the parts only one beat apart!

1) – Make a point of the contrast between the sharp sound of *stitch* and the long vowels of *time, saves* and *nine*.

2) – Here there is a lot of chatter on a short 'e' sound with the long vowel of *cure* coming at the end. The extra bar of non-vocal sounds in the b) version could be optional, but it creates a three-bar phrase and the opportunity of having a three-part round.


3) – It's not always easy to find material that fits so well into 9/8 time so this is a real gift. Try taking away the last bar of the b) version to make a five-bar phrase, but you don't have to do it in five parts!

4) – Here the emphasis is on what the words say rather than how the words sound.

5) – The non-vocal sounds can represent the 'dripping' and therefore overlap with the words in some places.

6) – *Hesitates* is the key word in this one. In the b) version it may be necessary to put a sound in at the beginning of bar 2 at first. But try to do without it eventually.


### 1. A stitch in time saves nine


a) 

b) 

c) 

### 2. Prevention is better than cure

a) 

b) 

### 3. Better to ask the way than go astray

a) 

b) 

### 4. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread

a) 

b) 

### 5. Constant dripping wears away the stone

a) 

b) 

c) 

### 6. He who hesitates is lost

a) 

b) 

c) 