

Musithink 106 Playing Around with “Frère Jacques”

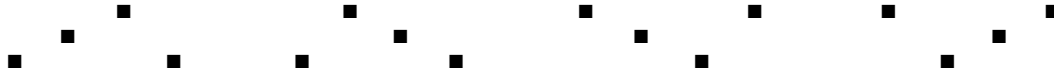
You'll learn how to manipulate music patterns in your head

You just need a bit of time and patience with yourself

1. This is a key activity. Up to now, you've been asked to think about pitches and note lengths in order to work out the patterns in a tune. Now you are going to play around with those patterns in your head. It's a similar process to doing mental arithmetic or working out which pattern is the flipped version of another in an intelligence test.

There's a real point to all of this. The more you play around with music patterns in your head the better you will be at recalling, recognising, comparing and reading all sorts of music. You are going to start manipulating musical material in your mind. Exciting!

2. Remember the first pattern in “Frère Jacques”. It's the first of the 4 patterns below. Look at the second one – that's the pattern backwards. What about the third and fourth?



Sing the first pattern to the pitch numbers. Think about how the second one is going to sound. Sing that one. What about the third – it starts on note 3 – and so does the 4th.

3. Now you're going to visualise the shape of the patterns in your head. Carefully sing each in turn without looking at the sheet. Later on today, when you haven't got the sheet anywhere near, visualise the first pattern and sing it. Do it backwards. Turn it upside down. Then backwards and upside down.

4. Do the same with the second pattern (“*dor-mez vous*”). Visualise the patterns for yourself.

5. The third pattern is more of a challenge because it has more notes. Take your time. Practise being able to “see” the pattern as it comes in the song while you sing the pitch notes.

Once you can do that, make the image in your mind again, and carefully “read” it backwards – ie from right to left. I find it like working out anagrams in your head – you have to “look” at the letters and move them around. Practise doing that until you are sure you can make the pattern visually in your mind.

Once you can do the pattern backwards, flip it over to do it upside down. Again, take your time – you need to master this skill.

Upside down and backwards?

6. The last pattern has its own challenge because of the jump in the pitch. Sing up a scale to work it out.

7. Sing the whole song backwards to the pitch numbers.

You can sing it all upside down and then backwards and upside down. Try using the same starting note as you did for singing it the right way up.