CONTENTS

How to use this book

Formation
The games herein are played in a circle, seated or standing, unless otherwise noted. To "take turns" means to go around the circle one at a time.

Age Level
These games are adaptable across all age levels. In general, the games proceed from simple to complex. Activities for the very young (two–six years old) need to be simple, in unison (not parts), and taught by aural imitation. Activities dependent on multiple parts and notation are best reserved for ages seven and up. I've resisted designating age groups for the games because there are so many variables. The children will clearly communicate by their energy level whether a game is too easy or too hard and you can adjust accordingly.

Sequential Development
This potpourri of games is not a precisely ordered curriculum, but it is arranged so that anyone ambitious enough to play them all would discover a progression. Those interested in trying a number of games might consider a different one for each age level (a good way to prepare for the final activity, "Rumpelstiltskin").

Class Size
Games that require a response from each student—saying names one at a time—usually reach a critical mass at 15 or so students; kids get restless, interest wanes. For larger groups (say 30), you may choose to form two groups, one for the beginning of class and one for the end. Some games may be played in more than one group simultaneously once the principle has been demonstrated and understood. Older children, who have made the connection between speech and rhythm and can hold their own parts amidst many layers, can go directly to games that require simultaneous expression or that move quickly around the circle.

Skills
The skills listed at the beginning of each game indicate which are required for successful playing and which can be developed through repeated playing. They also serve as a list of symptoms that help you diagnose problems. Do the children need more work with steady beat? Are they having trouble tracking? Can they hear it but lack the physical coordination to express it or do they have the motor skills, but lack aural comprehension? After playing the games, have a discussion about the skills employed. Affirming your students' improvements and recognizing their next challenge helps them become more aware of their learning process.

Concepts
The question of which game to play can be answered partly by the concept it highlights. If your class is learning basic note values, the games emphasizing syllables serve well; if the focus is meter, the spelling game can demonstrate the grouping of beats. Like skills, the concepts are markers on the musical path that help students see their progress.

Classroom Adaptations
Classroom teachers may use these games with a different conceptual emphasis—defining syllables, substituting spelling words for names, graphing math patterns, teaching alliteration in poetry, discussing origins of names. (Music teachers, share this book with your classroom colleagues!) How exciting it would be for the child to play the same game in math class, language arts class, history class, and music class with each teacher highlighting a different aspect—a truly integrated curriculum.

GAME 1. NAME RHYTHM

Skills: Hearing the natural spoken rhythm of each name
Matching speech and body percussion
Imitating leader's expression
Sensing the ending

Concepts: Duration values
Upbeats

Activities:

• Speak and clap your own name to a steady beat and invite the group to join you. Cue the end with gesture or inflection (louder, softer, hi-low, etc.):

*Doug, Doug, Doug, Doug, Doug, Doug, **Doug!***

• As above, speaking and clapping the name of the next child in the circle:

*Jen-ny, Jen-ny, Jen-ny, Jen-ny, Jen-ny, Jen-ny, **Jen-ny!***

• Continue around the circle until all names have been recited.

Variations:

• Perform with various body percussion (pat knees, snap fingers, etc.)

• Perform with gestures.

• Perform with different voice qualities.

• Have students suggest ways to perform each other's names.

• Have students create their own ways to express their names.

Comments:

This is the game I use to begin my first class with three-year-olds. It introduces the children to the basic mediums of beginning music class—body percussion, expressive speech, song, and gesture—and sets the tone for future classes by taking a musical approach to a concrete task—learning names. Repeating the names and hooking them to rhythm and gesture helps us all learn and remember them. We also make our first vital connection between the syllables of names and the basic rhythmic values of music. From John comes ♩ and from Sally ♫ . If Sophia is in class, three-year-olds begin to get a feeling for upbeats— ♪♫ .

Being masters at mimicry, most three-year-olds join in right away—but not all. Some sit there dumbfounded, wondering what they've gotten themselves into. Some are shy about hearing their name so forcefully and publicly pronounced, while others are tickled to be offered such recognition. Not only will you learn the children's names, but also something of their personalities.

This beginning game works well with most any age, though I wouldn't recommend it as a starting activity for teenagers.

GAME 10. NAME STORIES

Skill: Story improvisation

Concept: Polymeter

Activities:
- Group according to the first sounds as in GAME 9. If a group is larger than six, divide into smaller groups.

- Each group creates an ostinato with their names, accenting the first name in the series and accompanying it with a group gesture:

- The first person in the group tells the story of how she or he was named while the group continues speaking the ostinati softly and gesturing on the accent. The ostinati should be to a steady beat, providing a background texture while the storyteller speaks freely above. The speaker joins the ostinati when he or she is finished and the next person in the group tells his or her name story. (If the class is small enough, each group can perform one at a time. If this would take too long, all groups can perform simultaneously, telling stories within the groups.)

Variations:
- Select a group with three people, with four, and with five. Assign all other groups to join one of these three.

- All three groups perform their ostinati simultaneously to a common beat (accompanying with gesture as above). Volunteer storytellers step into the middle of the circle. When the narrators finish, the ostinati fade out:

$\frac{3}{4}$ **Mir**iam   Michael Madeleine   / **Mir**iam   Michael Madeleine   / **Mir**iam   Michael Madeleine   / . . .

$\frac{4}{4}$ **Barb**   Bob   Betty   Bill   /   **Barb**   Bob   Betty   Bill   /   **Barb** . . .

$\frac{5}{4}$ **James**   Jamel   Jowanza   Jamila   Jan   /   **James**   Jamel   Jowanza   Jamila   Jan . . .

- Ostinati may be sung.

Comments:
I recently played this game with the staff at my school. Though I have known many of them for more than 20 years, it was the first time I heard the stories of how they were named. In the process of playing with them, I realized I didn't really know my own story! (I had some vague notion that I was named after Douglas MacArthur, but my mother subsequently informed me that she simply liked the way the g of Doug went with the g of Goodkin.)