

Steadily-stop!

JSVDW 27/1/00

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A One two three four triangle triangle
One two three four triangle triangle
One two three four triangle triangle stop •
One two three four triangle triangle
One two three four triangle triangle
One two three four triangle triangle triangle triangle stop • And a

B triangle one two stop • And a
triangle one two triangle one two stop • And a
triangle one two S>>>

Q Stea-di-ly stea-di-ly stop • ba-boom!

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S Stea-di-ly stea-di-ly stop • ba-boom!
Stea-di-ly stea-di-ly stop • ba-boom!
Stea-di-ly stea-di-ly STOP!

A

One two three four trian- gle trian- gle One two three four

trian- gle trian- gle One two three four trian- gle trian- gle stop •

One two three four trian- gle trian- gle One two three four

trian- gle trian- gle One two three four trian- gle trian- gle

B

trian- gle trian- gle stop • And a trian- gle one two stop • And a

trian- gle one two trian- gle one two stop • And a trian- gle one two

Stea- di- ly stea- di- ly stop • ba- boom!

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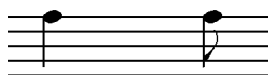
Steadily-stop! (reluctantly) explained

I have long been interested in the question of making complex additive rhythms accessible to relatively untrained or inexperienced players. Verbal mnemonics for rhythms are found pan-culturally, in situations where complex rhythms are transmitted as part of an aural tradition. (Examples may be found in the musics of India, Bali, South America and Africa)

This particular rhythmic sentence has been employed by me in a number of contexts, including work with gamelan players, a new music ensemble, and primary level music teachers. In each case, I have adopted the strategy of first teaching the rhythm aurally using the given mnemonic, and only then introducing the notation. I would strongly suggest a similar approach be adopted by anyone else attempting to use this material.

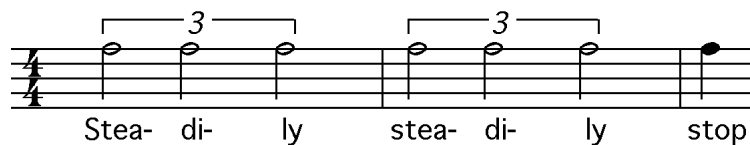
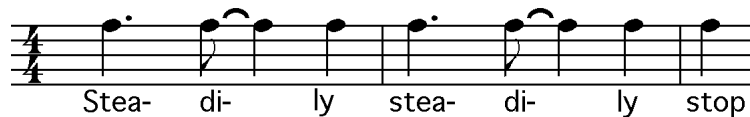
Here is an outline of how the rhythm should be presented;

- **Don't** hand out any music initially
- Make everyone put their instruments down
- Have ready copies of the 'Steadily-stop!' rhythm text and notation
- It's essential to memorise the rhythm yourself before you start to teach it; at the very least, you should be able to interpret the rhythm correctly using only the text
- Explain that you are going to teach a rhythm, and demonstrate it once through, either by clapping, drumming, or playing on a suitable instrument (allow for laughter!)
- Explain that, even though that seems complicated, it's very easy to pick up once you know the words
- Demonstrate the spoken version of the rhythm once, all the way through, at a tempo of about crotchet = 160
- Now break it down into sections. First teach the group the first half of section A, up to the bullet (•). Do this by speaking it through (always in the correct rhythm, of course), and have the group repeat it with you until they are confident
- Now say you are going to teach them the second half of section A, which is very like the first half. (Note that section A actually stops at the second bullet, the anacrusis 'And a' is actually part of section B) You can have some fun by asking them to spot the difference (two extra triangles, which you can emphasise slightly with your voice)
- Teach the second half of A in a similar way, and then put the two halves of A together.
- Section B is a little more complicated, and will similarly need to be broken down into smaller units; remember to start with 'And a'
- Once the group have more or less mastered B, you can try to put the whole thing together, still spoken
- Only at this point should you give out the text and the music. Stress that this is only for reference; in a rare case of this composer insisting that something in one of his scores is immutable, one is *strictly forbidden* from using the notation of this piece in performance!
- There can be confusion over the word 'triangle', which has three syllables, whereas the intention is to play only the first and third syllables;



tri- (an-) gle

- Resist the temptation to substitute a disyllabic word instead; it is essential for the player to feel all three quaver beats in order for a complex additive rhythm such as this to work
- Also, some people will pick up one of the rhythms incorrectly, as below, which should be discussed and corrected at some point;



There are many ways in which a piece of rhythmic material such as this could be used in a piece, but here is how I generally do it on the gamelan;

- I pick a random note and play the first half of A, up to the bullet, as a call
- The rest of the group joins in and plays the rest of A and B, up to 'ba-boom!', all picking their own random note independently (making a random 'chord')
- Then I leap to another note, and sustain (re-iterate) it very quietly. The rest of the group find the *same* note as me, and join me playing it, so we have a quiet drone on that pitch
- Someone takes an improvised solo over that drone
- When they feel ready, they play the first half of A as a call, and the group respond with the rest of the phrase
- Etc - move to another note, another solo, another call and answer
- After about three or four solos, we are ready for the ending. This is much easier to do than explain! Basically it goes like this (from B);

| | |
|--|-------------|
| And a | |
| triangle one two stop • And a | } |
| triangle one two triangle one two stop • And a | |
| triangle one two | |
| Stea-di-ly stea-di-ly stop • ba-boom! | Everyone |
| Stea-di-ly stea-di-ly stop • ba-boom! | Leader only |
| Stea-di-ly stea-di-ly STOP! | Everyone |

- In other words, the leader does one extra phrase at the end, joined by everyone for a second extra phrase, but resisting the temptation to put in the last 'ba-boom!'