

The Great Learning, paragraph 2

Singing

KNOW
THE POINT OF REST
AND
THEN
HAYE
AN ORDERLY MODE OF PROCEDURE

HAVING THIS ORDERLY PROCEDURE
ONE CAN
GRASP THE AZURE
THAT IS
TAKE HOLD OF A CLEAR CONCEPT

HOLDING A CLEAR CONCEPT
ONE CAN
BE AT PEACE
IN-
TERNALLY

BEING
THUS
CALM
ONE CAN
KEEP ONE'S HEAD IN MOMENTS OF DANGER

HE WHO CAN
KEEP HIS HEAD IN THE PRESENCE OF A TIGER
IS
QUALIFIED
TO COME TO HIS DEED IN DUE HOUR

The image shows five staves of handwritten musical notation. The lyrics are written vertically above the staves. The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The lyrics are: KNOW THE POINT OF REST AND THEN HAYE AN ORDERLY MODE OF PROCEDURE; HAVING THIS ORDERLY PROCEDURE ONE CAN GRASP THE AZURE THAT IS TAKE HOLD OF A CLEAR CONCEPT; HOLDING A CLEAR CONCEPT ONE CAN BE AT PEACE IN-TERNALLY; BEING THUS CALM ONE CAN KEEP ONE'S HEAD IN MOMENTS OF DANGER; HE WHO CAN KEEP HIS HEAD IN THE PRESENCE OF A TIGER IS QUALIFIED TO COME TO HIS DEED IN DUE HOUR.

Drumming

Mary 

Polaris 

Touch 

Superior 

Imek 

Castor 

Pollux 

Taste 

Michigan 

Spades 

White 

Black 

Smell 

Huron 

Hearts 

Romulus 

Remus 

Sight 

Erie 

Diamonds 

Right 

Left 

Hearing 

Ontario 

Clubs 

SINGING. The notes written as semibreves are sung very strongly and held for the length of one very long breath. The words written vertically over a note are distributed freely along that one very long breath. Sing these notes in the written order making shorter pauses between notes and longer pauses at barlines. The text is sung through five times. If a note is out of range transpose it up or down an octave. The commencement of each sung note should coincide with the initial stroke or rest of the accompanying rhythm.

DRUMMING. Each drum rhythm is repeated over and over like a tape loop for the duration of one bar of the vocal part. The 26 rhythms fall into 11 groups: 2 pentads, 1 tetrad, 4 pairs and 4 unigrams. The words in front of the rhythms are a mnemonic based on this grouping. Like the vocal phrases, the drum rhythms are to be played strong and energetic throughout. Unlike the vocal phrases, they may be played in any order, and the selection of a tempo for each one is up to the individual drummers. The rhythms should be memorised.

A PERFORMANCE

A number of groups are formed each consisting of the following: one drummer, one lead singer, and a number of supporting singers. These groups take up positions as widely separated as possible, and each group functions autonomously, as follows: The drummer starts with the rhythm of his choice. When this rhythm is established the lead singer sings through the notes of the first bar as described above, each entry coinciding with the initial stroke or rest of the rhythm. The supporting singers do the same, getting the notes from the leader and entering on each note as soon as possible after the leader. Their function is to support and amplify the leader's voice so that it is not placed under undue strain. The leader must be careful not to sing a new note until all his supporters have finished the preceding one. When all singers are finished with the last note of a bar the leader makes a sign to the drummer, who is then free (at his leisure) to select a second rhythm and establish that. He should not leave a gap between the two rhythms. So the cycle proceeds, each drummer going through the 26 rhythms in any order and all singers singing all the phrases in the order given, sticking by their respective leaders.

The final rhythms of all the drummers (i.e. each one's 26th rhythm, probably all different) should be played in the same tempo. To achieve this a position visible to all drummers is pre-selected, and the first drummer to complete his 25th rhythm walks over to this position to play his 26th. Then, as the other drummers reach their final rhythms, they take their tempo from him.

One of the singers may start and stop the proceedings from the same position. Start the piece cleanly: all drummers enter with their chosen rhythms simultaneously on the chosen singer's beat. End it raggedly (probably best if the lead singer of the first drummer to reach his final rhythm does this): At any time after all drummers have achieved the same tempo or when it appears that this is unlikely to occur, the singer may signal the end, whereupon all drummers complete the rhythmic pattern they are in the middle of and stop (don't end on the next downbeat!).

This performance is not the only possible one: circumstances may encourage the devising of others (e.g. all members of the chorus could both drum and sing).