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A SEA OF STORIES

Music and Myths from Southeast Asia

Educator's Guide



Lesson Outline

01 Let's Learn

Recall what you know about the *ranat thum* and learn about the improvisational methods used.

02 Let's Watch

Watch and observe the two techniques used in the improvisation.

03 Let's Understand

Learn how to improvise using the *kep* method.

04 Let's Demonstrate

Demonstrate how to do the *kep* improvisation method.

05 Let's Try

Work in groups to improvise a melody using the *Kep* method.

06 Let's Perform

Present improvisation in front of the class.



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01 Let's Learn

Ranat Thum



- A low-pitched xylophone used in the music of Thailand.
- 18 wooden keys stretched over a boat-shaped trough resonator.
- Lower and wider in shape compared to other xylophones.
- Typically played in accompaniment with other traditional Thai instruments.
- “Ranat” refers to xylophones and “thum” means lower tone.

Improvisational Methods

Kro Method

- The same few notes are played repetitively.
- Notes are in octaves and tend to move in leaps, rather than in steps.



Kep Method

- More notes are added to a main melody.
- Notes are closer together and move in a step-wise motion most of the time (eg. E F G).



02 Let's Watch



(Click on the image in slideshow mode to view the video)

(i) Kro Method
(05:54 – 07:02)

(ii) Kep Method
(07:04 – 09:23)

03 Let's Understand

Kep Method



- More notes are added to a main melody.
- Notes are closer together and move in a step-wise motion most of the time (eg. E F G).

04 Let's Demonstrate

Main Melody:

C D C B A B C

What are one or two notes we can add between each of these main notes using steps or skips? Let's try this on the xylophone.

Tip: Try to use the notes nearer to the main notes rather than notes that are very far away.

05 Let's Try

Main Melody:

E D E F G F E

Group Task:

Write your own improvisation using the *kep* method by adding one or two improvised notes in between each of the notes from the main melody. Try it out on your instrument!



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06 Let's Perform





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Well done!

You managed to improvise using the *kep* method!

This is the end of the lesson resource.
Keep exploring and making music!

Educational Guide Writer:
Serena Chew

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