

Canon in D Johann Pachelbel

Canon in D is a piece of Classical music written by Johann Pachelbel around 1680. Although it has gained popularity fairly recently it has been used in many popular songs and is often heard at weddings. By the end of this worksheet you could be playing along to Canon in D and using it to create our own compositions.

This sheet can be used for all musicians, singers and lyricists, it aims to explore Canon in D, its influence on popular music and to serve as an inspiration for your own work. It involves listening, playing and creative writing.

Critical listening

[Click here to listen to Canon in D](#)

Above is a link to an example of the piece, after listening to it jot down any thoughts or emotions that the piece provokes. Think about the texture and dynamics in the piece. How many instruments can you hear? What is the mood of the piece? Where could you imagine the piece being played?

Brief analysis of the piece

Canon in D uses an *ostinato* (the same bass line repeated over and over again) and a canon (the same music repeated by the violin parts, in a round). Listen out for the same music being passed between the violins.

The chords for the piece are listed below notice how they repeat. ..

||: D A | Bm F#m | G D | G A :||

Examples in popular music

[Ladies and gentlemen we are floating in space Spiritualized](#)

Above is a link to Spiritualized song Ladies and gentlemen we are floating in Space. Listen to the piece and compare it with Canon in D. How is it similar and how is it different? Which do you prefer and why? Notice how it uses the same chord structure.

I have attached a separate sheet with examples, choose one song and see if you can spot the Canon in D chord sequence.

Tasks

Using the chord sequence above use your instrument to play along with the original piece and then play it on your own. Try arpeggios or single notes to accompany the piece.

Create your own melody or riff to accompany the piece, it doesn't have to be complicated simple works well. Improvise your own solo section using voice or your instrument.

Write your own set of lyrics inspired by the piece, develop your own melody.

Record your own version of the piece with your own ideas on your phone or computer.

Extension

Why not listen to some other pieces of classical music for inspiration see where it takes you.