



Rhythm Pick n Mix

In C by American composer **Terry Riley** is a piece of music for an indefinite number of performers. This means the piece can be played by any number of musicians but the composer suggests 'a group of about 35 is desired if possible!'. *In C* is made up of **53 short musical phrases**. Here is the score:



Watch this exciting performance of *In C* by Africa Express and Tate Modern:

<https://youtu.be/aX96z7AulCs>

The musicians can **choose** which phrases they play, **when** they should **begin** and **how many** times they should play a phrase before moving on to the next. They can also decide on the **dynamics** and how to **articulate** the phrases. This means that each performance of the music sounds **different** and **unique**.

In *Workers Union* by Dutch composer **Louis Andriessen**, all the musicians have the **same single line of music** which shows the **rhythms** and whether the music is going up or down in pitch - **the pitch contour**. The musicians are **free to choose what notes they play** but must go up or down as the music indicates. Here is the American group *Bang on a Can* performing it:

Your Turn!

In this activity you will **add pitches to given rhythms** to create your own short musical phrases. Then you will use your musical phrases to create your own piece of music. We have created a sheet of rhythms for **Beginner, Novice, Intermediate** and **Advanced** musicians. Like Riley, we have created a number of different phrases for you to choose from - **10 in total**. The only difference is that we have only given rhythms! You can find these sheets in the download section.

In the **guidance notes** for *In C*, Terry Riley suggests that every musician should play through each musical phrase separately before playing the piece through. Before you start adding pitches to your rhythms, **practise clapping each rhythm slowly**.

Use a metronome to help you keep time. Here is a link to an online metronome <https://bit.ly/2T2CMeT>. Try setting the **tempo** at 60 bpm (beats per minute) to start with. Clap your rhythm a few times at this speed before trying it at a **faster tempo**.



Once you feel confident about reading and clapping the rhythms, try **playing** them on your **instrument** using **one note**. Now **add pitches/notes** to your rhythms and write them out on the sheets provided in the downloads section. Here is an example:

For each level we have provided **note/pitch suggestions** for different instruments to use. You can find these in the download section. However, if you would like to explore using any of the twelve tones/pitches of the **chromatic scale** then please do! You can use the notes/pitches in **any octave/register**.

Now **practise** your **10 musical phrases** with notes/pitches. When you feel confident playing them, it's time to start creating your piece! As the composer, you can choose:

- **Which** of the phrases to use in your piece
- **What order** to play the phrases in
- **How many times** to play the phrases if you choose to repeat them
- The **tempo (speed)** at which you play your phrases
- The **dynamics** of each phrase
- The **articulation** that should be used
- The **character** of your piece (is it angry, excited, frightened, calm etc)

If you would like to, **try notating** your finished composition. There is manuscript/music paper in the download section. You could use computer software. Musescore is free notation-writing software. <https://musescore.org/en/download>

Or you could **cut up your examples** and put them in an **order** indicating **how many times** a phrase should be played. You could make **multiple** copies to allow you to return to an idea i.e. a **route map** instead of a notated score.

Please send any music you create to learning@bcmg.org.uk