

# The Alice Sound



**TRANSFORMING HUMPTY**

CREATIVE MUSIC PROJECT

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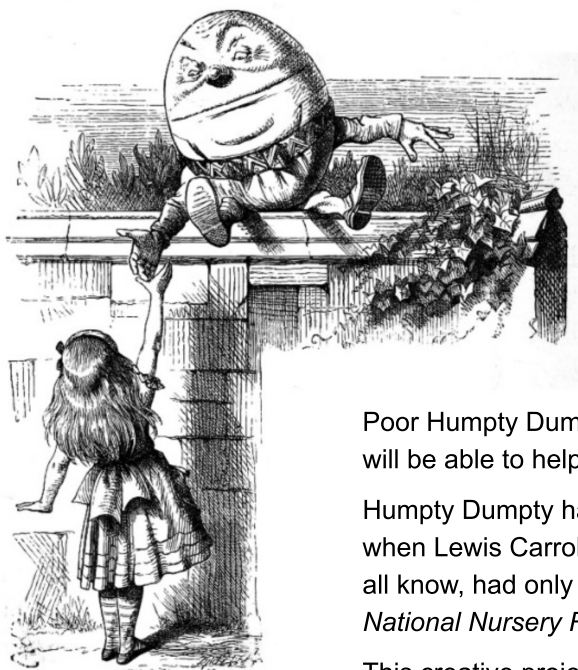
CREATIVE MUSIC PROJECT



LSO London Symphony Orchestra

Queen Mary University of London

## CREATIVE MUSIC PROJECT - TRANSFORMING HUMPTY



*'Why, if I ever DID fall off – which there's no chance of – but IF I did...'*

**Humpty Dumpty**

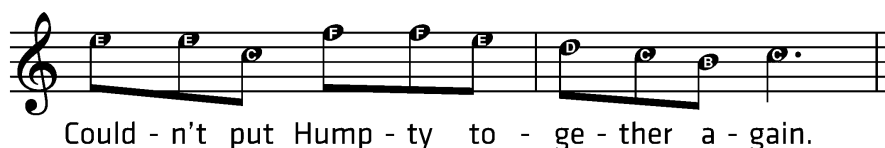
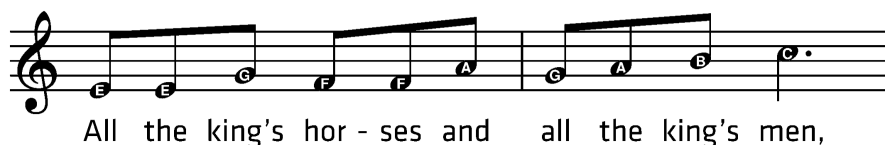
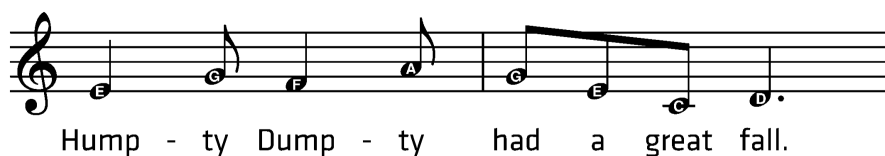
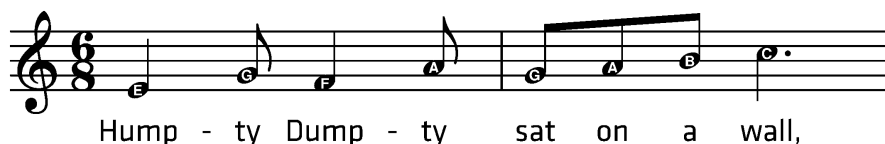
Poor Humpty Dumpty. We all know what's going to happen! Not even the King will be able to help him.

Humpty Dumpty has been falling off walls ever since 1797. Interestingly, when Lewis Carroll sent him through the looking-glass, the famous song we all know, had only just been published (appearing in James William Elliott's *National Nursery Rhymes and Nursery Songs*).

This creative project will challenge you to give Humpty Dumpty's popular melody a complete makeover.

### 1. LEARN TO PLAY / SING THIS VERY FAMOUS SONG.

This melody will work well on pitched percussion instruments. Notice that it easily divides into four phrases (with one phrase per line above). The easiest way to start, is by dividing the class into four groups and allocating a different phrase to each group.



Continued on next page →

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## 2. ONCE THE CLASS ARE CONFIDENT PLAYING THE MELODY, TRANSFORM IT.

Using the pitches of their phrase, challenge each group to make a brand-new section of music.

Aim to make something that sounds **completely different** from the original song.

TRY THE FOLLOWING

- change the speed, volume, length of the notes.
- play all the notes in the phrase at the same time as a cluster chord.
- make a repeating pattern (or several) using some of the notes in the phrase.

## 3. MAKE A COMPLETE SECTION OF MUSIC.

Add anything else you like to your phrase. Feel free to add other contrasting parts or rhythms.

The children may do anything they wish BUT they *must* use all of the notes from Humpty's phrase at some point in their music.

## 4. JOIN THE FOUR NEW PIECES OF MUSIC TOGETHER.

Assemble the class and try playing the four new pieces, in turn, one after the other.

*Did it work?*

*Even if the music sounded very different to the original, could the children hear the pitches of Humpty's melody in this new music?*

Challenge the class to adjust and refine their music.

*Would the music sound better played in a different order?*

*Can any groups' music overlap with another?*

*Is there a way – at some point – to play Humpty's tune in its original form?*

Experiment and explore different ideas until you have the best possible version of the music.

## 5. NOW, ADD SOME CARROLLIAN DIALOGUE.

Humpty Dumpty appears in chapter 6 of *Through the Looking-Glass* and his meeting with Alice doesn't get off to a great start. Their heated exchange is pure Carrollian gold though!

*Can the children find a way to incorporate some of the text from this chapter into their music?*

Please note, there's no need for the class to add entire paragraphs of the book into their music (unless of course, they want to!) Instead, try selecting a few sentences of Humpty's dialogue to speak over or in-between the various sections of your music.

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## HERE ARE A FEW TO CONSIDER:

*"It is very provoking to be called an egg – VERY!"*

*"Some people have no more sense than a baby!"*

*"My name means the shape I am – and a good handsome shape it is too."*

*"With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost."*

There are lots more to select. But if nothing in the book works with your music – why not write your own?

## 5. FINALLY, FINISH WITH A FALL.

Surely it is only a matter of time before poor Humpty will plummet from the wall!

*Can you make a section of music that sounds as if it is falling?*

Working now as one big group, challenge the class to make a short, final section of music that sounds as if Humpty is having – 'a great fall'.

Poor old Humpty Dumpty...

**HAVE FUN.**

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