Max’s Musical Maths: Decoding Notation

Learning objective: To understand and apply knowledge of musical notation, including note values, the stave, and time signatures.

Help Max the monkey solve these musical puzzles. Use your knowledge of rhythm and pitch to complete the tasks accurately. Remember to check the duration of each note value carefully.

Word bank: Stave · Treble Clef · Minim · Crotchet · Quaver · Semibreve · Bar Line · Time Signature

1. Max is writing a piece of music in 4/4 time. If he has already placed one minim and one crotchet in a bar, how many more beats does he need to complete the bar? Justify your answer using your knowledge of note values. (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast a semibreve and a quaver. How many quavers would fit into the duration of one semibreve? Show your working out. (2 marks)

3. Explain why the 'Treble Clef' is positioned at the start of the stave. What might happen to the music if it were missing? (2 marks)

4. Zara the zebra is drawing a pattern of notes. If she draws four crotchets followed by two minims, how many beats are there in total? Write the number of beats. (1 mark)

5. What is the purpose of a bar line in a piece of sheet music? How does it help a musician keep the rhythm steady? (2 marks)

6. If Max wanted to create a rhythm that lasts for exactly 12 beats using only minims, how many minims would he need to draw on the stave? (1 mark)

Draw: Draw a five-line stave. On the stave, draw a Treble Clef, a bar line, and a sequence of notes that adds up to exactly four beats (4/4 time signature). Label each note with its name (e.g., Crotchet).

Extension challenge: Compose your own two-bar rhythm using a mixture of minims, crotchets, and quavers. Write a short explanation for a friend describing why you chose that specific arrangement of notes and how it might sound when played at a fast tempo.