

DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE

Traditional (arr. by Emyr Rhys)



ABOUT THIS SONG

This is a traditional song based on the song 'Down by the riverside', which was sung as a work song by those enslaved in the American South. The melody was also used in a 1960s jingle for McDonald's.

THEMES/SUBJECTS

Gospel/spiritual/work song

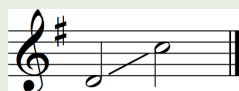
CURRICULUM KEY LINKS

Languages, Literacy & Communication
Humanities
Health & Wellbeing

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Vocal range

A 7th



Vocal format

Call and response/ independent parts

Musical elements

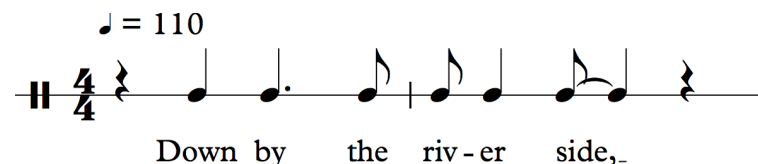
Duration and structure

Musical characteristics

Syncopated rhythms and upbeat entry in verse and chorus, simple verse and chorus structure

Warm-up Exercises

- Ask learners to lie down on the floor on their backs, with plenty of space around them. They should start with simple slow breathing: let the air flow in for four beats; hold for four beats; and breathe out naturally.
- Ask all learners to 'hum' as a siren, moving up and down in pitch, following your hand signal from high up in the air to very low by your knees.
- Ask learners to stand with plenty of space around them and march on the spot to a steady beat. Once learners have established a steady beat, ask them to clap between each foot stamp on the off beat.
- Start them off again, but this time with a faster pace. If they struggle, slow down the pace and start again.
- Ask learners to try to clap/say the following characteristic rhythm:



Suggested key links with other Areas, cross-cutting themes &/or local, national and international contexts

This song was sung by those enslaved in the American South.

- Explore the lyrics - what are their origins?
- Further investigate the enslavement trade - what role did Wales play in this?
- Discover more about the lives of black people in history, such as the story of Willis the Fugitive, Abertawe.
- Explore Welsh history linked to black history.

GRADING: INTERMEDIATE

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Teaching and learning

- 1 Play a recording of a full performance of the song a few times. Learners should identify, and focus on listening to, the response and clap the rhythm.
- 2 Ask learners to identify the three parts in the response.
- 3 Play a recording or sing the first verse (bars 1 to 16) with the call only (without the response). Ask learners to respond by clapping and saying the words.
- 4 Start by teaching the melody of the response (Part 1) to all learners. Sing or play this part. Ask learners to echo it back; remember to give them their starting note (B).
- 5 Follow the same steps with the second and third response part. You should go over all three parts numerous times to build learners' confidence.
- 6 Divide the group into three, one for each response part. Give all groups their starting notes, and ask them to perform all parts together unaccompanied. Slow the pace down to ensure accuracy in the way they respond.
- 7 When the co-ordination between all groups is secure, perform the call yourself or use a recording and direct learners to join in with the response.
- 8 When all learners are confident with their response, rotate the three parts so that each group has an opportunity to sing all parts. You may need to remind the groups of their starting notes.
- 9 Introduce the melody of the chorus to everyone (bars 17 to 31). Ask learners to read through the lyrics first before they attempt to sing. Ask learners to join in with the recording; encourage them to listen to the rhythm and concentrate on getting an accurate performance with clear diction.

Integral Skills

- This song has a second verse and two harmony parts in the chorus. Read through the lyrics of verse 2, and then practise with the recording. Rehearse all three harmony parts of the chorus before attempting to sing together. When you are happy with this section, rehearse thoroughly and try to perform with the recording.
- Teach the call to all learners or give an individual an opportunity to perform. Through performing the response a number of times, learners will naturally become familiar with the melody of the call. Point out the up-beat entry point of each verse.
- Encourage learners to put plenty of drama and character into their performance; they could create their own movement to imagine the scene of the slaves working.

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Statements of what matters:

- *Exploring the expressive arts is essential to developing artistic skills and knowledge and it enables learners to become curious and creative individual*
- *Creating combines skills and knowledge, drawing on the senses, inspiration and imagination*

- Listen to and appraise other recordings of work songs, for example, discuss the main characteristics, listen to the lyrics, and discuss the story.
- A recording of this song was released by Elvis Presley and Louis Armstrong. Listen to and appraise one of these recordings and discuss its main characteristics and features. Learners could also compare the song with an arrangement of the song using the Welsh words 'Lawr ar lan y môr', performed by DJ SG on his 'Clwb Cymru 2' album.
- Divide the group into smaller groups to compose their own response to the calls. They should only use the notes DEGAB, but need to come up with their own catchy melody and rhythm. Give each group an opportunity to perform to the rest of the groups, and to appraise each other's performances.

Assessment for Learning:

- *Responding and reflecting, both as artist and audience, is a fundamental part of learning in the expressive arts*

Questioning

Tool: Whiteboards

Describe the pace (fast/slow) and texture (thick/thin) of this song.

- What is a work song? How can we discover more information?
- Where is the lowest note in the melody part? What vowel sound is sung to this note?

Feedback

Tool: Instant feedback

Give learners instant feedback during teaching and learning. For example, comment on how well learners maintain their part, or on how well they respond to your hand directions when changing dynamics. Ask learners how they could position their group to make it easier to maintain their part?

Self- and peer assessment

Tool: Talking partners

Ask learners to share with a partner three new things they have learnt. For example:

- what they found easy or difficult
- what they need to improve
- something they would like to learn next.