

O HAPPY DAY

Edwin Hawkins arr. Owain Gethin/Emyr Rhys



ABOUT THIS SONG

This uplifting song is a 1969 gospel classic.

THEMES/SUBJECTS

Gospel/religion

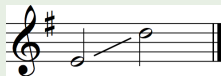
CURRICULUM KEY LINKS

Humanities
Expressive Arts

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Vocal range

A 9th



Vocal format

Call and response/ independent parts

Musical elements

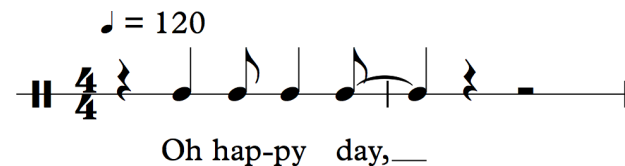
Texture and duration

Musical characteristics

Unison call and three-part harmony
response, syncopation in response

Warm-up Exercises

- Ask learners to stand completely relaxed with their feet slightly apart. They should stretch as tall as possible without lifting any part of their feet off the ground; and then lift their arms gradually forward and above their head as high as they can. Learners should repeat this exercise, this time standing on their tiptoes and stretching even taller.
- Learners should sing the phrase 'Oh happy day' on the note C, and then sing the phrase to the scale of C Major (CDEFGABC1). Concentrate on clear diction and accurate pitch.
- Ask learners to move their stomach muscles in and out without breathing. (This will help make them aware of the movement required when breathing.) Ask learners to breathe in for four beats, feeling the ribs expanding outwards, and out for four beats, keeping the ribs engaged for as long as possible.
- Demonstrate the characteristic rhythm of the song:



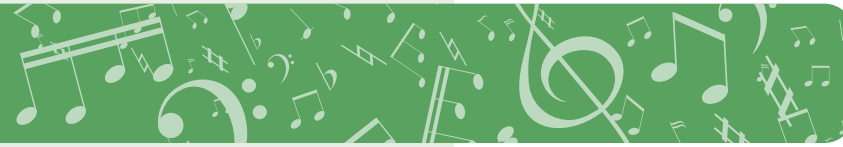
Suggested key links with other Areas, cross-cutting themes &/or local, national and international contexts

- Find out more about the history and origins of gospel music.
- Discover more about Black history and famous Gospel artists such as Little Richard and Aretha Franklin.
- Listen to and learn a range of gospel songs such as Amazing Grace and Rock of Ages. Explore the characteristics.
- What kind of atmosphere do these songs create? Which is your favourite? Why?
- Discover more about the influence of Gospel music on soul and R&B music in 1960s/1970s.

GRADING: INTERMEDIATE

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Teaching and learning

- 1 Play a recording of the chorus a few times. Learners should identify the response and clap its rhythm. Elicit that there are three harmony parts in the response.
- 2 Sing the call (that is, without the response) and ask learners to respond by clapping and saying the words of the response.
- 3 Divide the class into three groups – one to sing Part 1 of the response (top), one to sing Part 2 (middle) and the other to sing Part 3 (lower).
- 4 Start with Part 1. Sing or play the first response and ask learners to echo it back. Don't forget to give learners their starting note (B).
- 5 Follow the same steps for Part 2 (starting note – G) and Part 3 (starting note – D). Go over all parts numerous times to build learners' confidence.
- 6 Give all groups their starting notes and perform the three parts together unaccompanied. Slow down the pace to ensure accuracy in the response.
- 7 Attempt to work through the verse, making sure all learners follow their parts accurately. Focus also on the syncopated rhythm of the response.
- 8 Give plenty of support to help learners singing Parts 2 and 3 find their notes.
- 9 Try to perform the complete response in three parts with or without the recording. Sing the call yourself or ask for a volunteer. Change the parts around so that everyone has an opportunity to sing all three parts.

Integral Skills

- The verse of this song is in three-part harmony. Read through the lyrics, and then learn the three parts with the recording. Try to perform the verse without accompaniment to encourage learners to listen carefully to the harmony.
- The words need to be very clear, with strong consonants and focused vowels. Teach the call to all learners or give individuals an opportunity to perform. Most will be familiar with the call through performing the response numerous times, but you may need to go over some of the rhythms.

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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*

- With a partner, learners could use the rhythm and words of the chorus to compose their own call and response. The call should include steps and leaps, and the response should move mainly by step and include repetition. Learners should use the notes of the G Major scale (GABCDEF#G1). Pairs should perform their call and response to the class using instruments or voices.
- 'Oh happy day' was originally recorded by The Edwin Hawkins Singers on their album entitled 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'. Listen to and appraise this recording, and discuss its main characteristics.

Assessment for Learning:

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

Questioning

Tool: Think-pair-share

- What kind of atmosphere does this song create? How?
- What is the structure of the song? Explain your answer.
- How else might we arrange a performance of this song?

Self- and peer assessment

Tool: WWW / EBI

Record a class performance of the song. Listen to this recording, and then ask learners to suggest 'what went well' (WWW) and make suggestion on how to improve using 'even better if' (EBI).

Feedback

Tool: Temporary comments

Give learners temporary comments on areas they need to develop. To improve their accuracy of rhythm, learners may need to revisit certain phrases and listen again to the recording. Give learners the opportunity to address comments during the session, and then comment again on their success.