

ROCK-A MY SOUL

Traditional arr. Owain Gethin Davies



ABOUT THIS SONG

This is a popular African American spiritual in a swing style.

THEMES/SUBJECTS

Spiritual/religious education/Christian

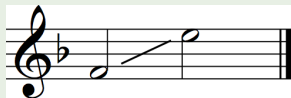
CURRICULUM KEY LINKS

Languages, Literacy & Communication
Humanities
Health & Wellbeing

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Vocal range

A 7th



Vocal format

Unison/independent parts

Musical elements

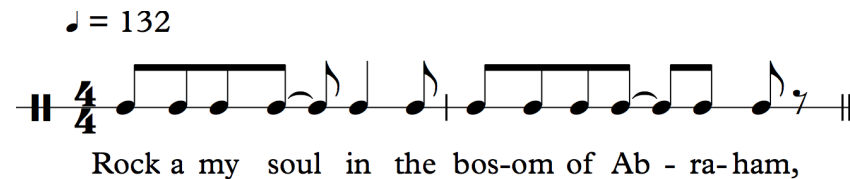
Texture and structure

Musical characteristics

Unison and three-part harmony, swing rhythm

Warm-up Exercises

- Ask learners to breathe in deeply, and then hiss or blow out slowly, counting how long they take to blow out. Repeat this exercise and encourage learners to improve on their previous time.
- Ask learners to balance on one leg and rotate the other leg in a circular motion, starting with the ankles, then the knees, and finally the hips. Learners should do this clockwise and then anticlockwise, before repeating with the other leg.
- Ask learners to hum a siren, moving up and down in pitch, following your hand signal from high up in the air to low down by your knees.
- Demonstrate the characteristic rhythm of the song:



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

- Discover the history of African-American spirituals.
- Learn other spirituals e.g. Down by the Riverside.
- What themes link them?
- These songs were often sung by those enslaved. Find out more about enslaved people in history in the 18th/19th Centuries and other Welsh history linked to black history.

GRADING: INTERMEDIATE

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Teaching and learning

- 1 Play the recording or sing the melody (Part 2) of the first chorus (bars 3 to 10). While listening, learners should focus on the step and leap movement in the melody and clap the rhythm.
- 2 When learners are familiar with the words, start introducing Part 2 in unison. Sing or play the first phrase a number of times, and then work through the chorus, making sure learners follow the part accurately.
- 3 Perform the chorus in unison with the recording, reminding learners to sing through all the phrases and to sustain the long note at the end of each phrase.
- 4 Introduce the harmony (Part 3). The first two bars (bars 3 to 4) should be sung once as an introduction before the melody starts. Make sure the quality of the sound doesn't deteriorate when singing these long-held notes.
- 5 When all learners are confident with Parts 2 and 3 in the first chorus, divide the class into two equal groups. Give the Red group the melody (Part 2) and the Purple group the harmony (Part 3). If learners struggle with a specific phrase, ask them to listen to you or the track and then join in.
- 6 Try to perform in two parts with or without the recording. Change the parts round so that everyone has an opportunity to sing both parts.
- 7 You may find that learning the first chorus is enough for one session and decide to tackle the two-part harmony in the first verse in the following session.
- 8 Introduce the melody (Part 2) of the first verse (bars 11 to 19) to all learners. Work through the verse, making sure learners follow the part accurately and observe the up beat entry point.
- 9 Next, introduce the harmony (Part 3) of the verse, again to all learners.
- 10 When all learners are confident with both parts, divide the class into two equal groups. Give one group the melody (Part 2) and the other group the harmony (Part 3).
- 11 After rehearsing the first verse and chorus thoroughly, try to perform with the recording.

Integral Skills

- This song has a second verse and a third harmony part in the second chorus. Read through the lyrics of Verse 2 and rehearse both parts before attempting to sing together. When you are happy with the second verse, divide the class into three and introduce the third harmony part of the second chorus to one group.
- Try to perform the second and third choruses in three parts without any accompaniment, to encourage learners to listen carefully to the sound of the harmony. The words need to be very clear, with strong consonants and focused vowels.
- Try to vary the dynamics in the performance. For example, sing the chorus pianissimo (very quiet) the first time, then forte (loud) on the repeat. Include a crescendo (gradually get louder) in verse 1 in bars 14 to 15 and a diminuendo (gradually get quieter) in bars 18 to 19.

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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*

- In small groups, learners could use the lyrics and rhythm of the chorus to compose a new melody. Use the pentatonic scale in F (CDFGA), include one leap and move elsewhere by step.
- Learners could perform the complete spiritual or just the chorus on tuned instruments. Provide a copy of the score and, if required, write the note names under all notes. Allow time to practise, and then perform in unison, two parts and three parts. Perform with half the class singing and the other half playing, and then vice versa.
- Ask learners to try to perform, with half the group singing and the other half playing, and then vice versa.
- Record and appraise the performance. A comparison could be made with the recording provided.

Assessment for Learning:

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

Questioning

Tool: Big question

- In your opinion, was this song easy or difficult to learn? What are your reasons?
- Is there a different point of view within the group? If so, why?

Feedback

Tool: Instant feedback

Give learners instant feedback on how well they maintain their part and respond to your hand directions when changing dynamics.

Self- and peer assessment

Tool: Talking partners

Learners share with a partner three new things they have learnt, what they found easy or difficult, what they need to improve, and something they would like to learn next.