

SHORTNIN' BREAD

Traditional arr. by Emyr Rhys



ABOUT THIS SONG

This folk song originates from the 'Old South', USA, and was first popularised by Lawrence Tibbett in the early 20th century. The reason it attracts attention now is the hard rock recording by Paul Chaplain and his Emeralds in 1960.

THEMES/SUBJECTS

Cooking/folk song

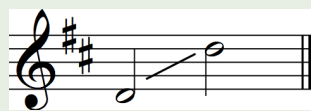
CURRICULUM KEY LINKS

Humanities
Science & Technology

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Vocal range

An 8th



Vocal format

Unison/independent parts

Musical elements

Texture and structure

Musical characteristics

Unison melody with two-part backing vocal harmony parts, simple verse and chorus structure

Warm-up Exercises

- Bend the knees and flop forward like a puppet. Imagine being pulled in different directions by a string, gradually moving to a tall confident pose. Flop back down and start this exercise again.
- Imagine that you are chewing a piece of very sticky toffee – use your tongue to dislodge it from your teeth.
- Start with simple slow breathing, with your shoulders down. Let the air flow in for four beats, hold for four beats and out naturally.
- Demonstrate the characteristic rhythm of the song:

♩ = 120

Ma-ma's lit - tle ba - by loves short'nin short' nin,

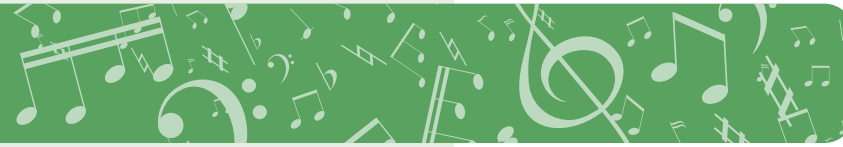
Suggested key links with other Areas, cross-cutting themes &/or local, national and international contexts

- This is a folk song from the Old South about Shortnin' Bread - a traditional recipe among plantations in the South states of America.
- Find out what this is - can you find a recipe?
- Research other traditional recipes from Wales and find out what their ingredients are. Have a go at baking some of them e.g:
 - Pice ar y Maen - Bara Brith - Cawl - Welsh rarebit - Glamorgan sausages -
 - Laver bread

GRADING: INTERMEDIATE

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Teaching and learning

- 1 Listen with learners to the first verse of the recording. After listening once, ask learners to listen again, this time joining in by clapping and chanting the rhythm.
- 2 When learners are familiar with the words, start with the melody of the verse in unison. Sing or play the first phrase a number of times, preferably unaccompanied or using the CânSing backing track provided.
- 3 Attempt to work through the verse. Make sure that all learners follow the part accurately and concentrate on the entry points and the dotted rhythms.
- 4 Perform the first verse in unison with the recording and remind learners to sing through all the phrases.
- 5 Introduce the melody of the chorus. The first two phrases of the chorus are repeated; all phrases begin with exactly the same rhythm and pitch. Make sure that the quality of the sound doesn't deteriorate when singing these repetitive phases.
- 6 If learners struggle with a specific phrase, ask them to listen to you or the track and then join in.
- 7 When all learners are confident with the melody in the verse and chorus, divide them into two equal groups. Give the Red group the backing vocal (Part 1) top part and the Purple group the backing vocal (Part 2) bottom part.
- 8 Introduce the backing vocal parts to both groups in the verse and chorus; introduce both parts simultaneously. The first two phrases in the verses and chorus are repeated exactly the same over the third and fourth phrase of the melody.
- 9 After practising both backing vocal parts in the verse and chorus thoroughly, try to perform with the recording of the melody.

Integral Skills

- Try to perform the chorus in three parts without any accompaniment, so that learners listen very carefully to the sound of all the different parts sung together. You might find it helpful to tap the pulse on a percussion instrument. Learners should concentrate on their accuracy of rhythm and intonation.
- This song has five verses. Read through the lyrics of each verse, and then practise with the recording. When you are happy with all the verses and chorus, divide the group into three and perform with both backing vocal parts.
- Add your own movements that convey the words and feeling/style of the song.

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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*

- A recording of this song was released by Paul Chaplain and his Emeralds on their 'Shortnin' bread' album. Listen to and appraise this recording and discuss its main characteristics and features. Learners could also compare the song with a different arrangement, performed by the Andrews Sisters on their 'Beer barrel polka' album.
- Divide learners into smaller groups and ask each group to compose its own folk song. Limit the melody to DEFGA, and encourage learners to create catchy lyrics and rhythm. Give them all an opportunity to perform to the other 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: Group responses

- How many beats are there in each bar?
- What is the structure of this song? Explain your answer.
- How many times do we hear the chorus? Is it exactly the same every time? Explain your answer.

Feedback

Tool: How to improve

Show learners through target setting how to improve. A suitable target for some learners might be to come in quickly and confidently on the beat in the verses, and for others it might be focusing on achieving crisp diction. You could demonstrate yourself or by playing a recording. After giving learners time to improve, check that targets have been reached.

Self- and peer assessment

Tool: Learner-to-learner dialogue

Ask learners to take it in turns to be the teacher when discussing the performance and to ask questions. You may need to give them some suggestions of possible questions, for example:

- Was this a hard or easy song to learn? Why?
- What do you like/dislike about this song?