

THE HOLLY

Traditional arr Owain Gethin Davies



ABOUT THIS SONG

The Holly is a translation by Carlene Marr/Syr Idris Bell of the traditional Welsh folksong 'Y Gelynnen'. The song is rejoicing about the holly tree.

THEMES/SUBJECTS

Folk song/trees/birds

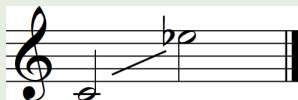
CURRICULUM KEY LINKS

Humanities
Health & Wellbeing

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Vocal range

A 10th



Vocal format

Unison/independent parts

Musical elements

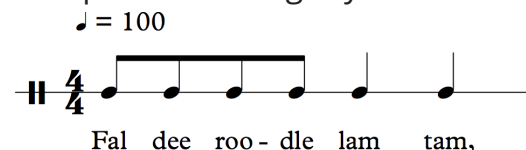
Pitch and structure

Musical characteristics

Use of descant, melodic triadic patterns and simple four verse strophic structure.

Warm-up Exercises

- Stand in a circle and ask learners to copy your facial expressions, from glum and long to open and bright. Make a big smile and show the cheeks and corner of the mouth lifted. Make big alert eyes and high eye brows, then back to closed eyes. Ask individuals to be the leader and the rest of the group to follow their facial expressions.
- Stand with your feet apart, and both arms loosely by your side. Ask learners to breathe in and blow out deeply, first placing both hands on their ribs at the side, then on their lower backs. Learners should be able to feel the movement all round. If you have the space, repeat this exercise with learners lying on the floor to see if it feels the same. The breathing requires control from the whole of the upper body
- Ask learners to echo back the lyrics - 'Fal dee roo-dle lam tam, To lee ri dle dee,' (see characteristic rhythm below). Start this exercise as a rhythmic chant before singing the lyrics on a note of your choice (eg D above middle C). Emphasise clear diction of the words and aim for a consistent smooth sound. Hold the last note on 'dee' for as long as possible.
- Characteristic rhythm - clap the following rhythm:



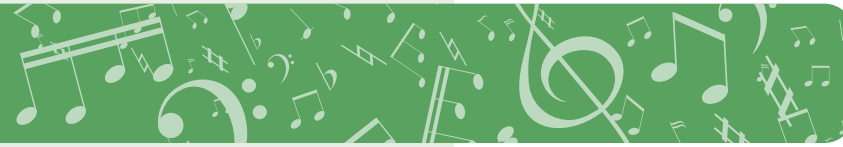
Suggested key links with other Areas, cross-cutting themes &/or local, national and international contexts

- Listen and appraise other Welsh folk songs.
- Research different trees and plants that are native to Wales and the UK.
- Where in Wales can they be found?
- Are the evergreen or deciduous?
- Do they have any useful properties for medicine or industry?

GRADING: **INTERMEDIATE**

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Teaching and learning

- 1 Listen to the recording of this folk song, asking learners to focus on the melodic leaps that move mainly in triadic movement (3rds).
- 2 Listen to the recording of the first verse without the voices and ask learners to follow the words and clap the rhythm or chant the words. If they struggle with a specific passage, ask them to listen to you/the track and then ask them to join in.
- 3 When learners are familiar with the words and rhythm, sing or play the melody (Part 1) of the first verse and ask learners to echo it back. Remember to give learners their starting note (E). Point out that the phrase only uses triadic movement using the notes C, E and G and all notes are of the same length.
- 4 Perform the first verse with the recording or unaccompanied. Slow down the pace to ensure accuracy in the way learners respond. Remind learners to concentrate on singing through each phrase and keep a consistent sound quality.
- 5 Work through all four verses in unison with the recording and remind learners to sing with clear diction. This also provides an opportunity to discuss the structure of the verse -strophic structure.
- 6 You may find that learning the melody will be enough progress for one session and you will tackle the second and third part in the following session.
- 7 When all learners are confident with the melody, introduce the harmony part (Part 2) to everyone.
- 8 When all the learners are confident with this part, divide the group into two equal groups. Give one group the melody (part 1) and the other group the harmony (part 2).
- 9 Give plenty of support to the second part, try to perform in two parts with the recording. Change parts round so that everyone has an opportunity to sing all parts.

Integral Skills

- This song includes a third descant part, introduce this part to a small group of learners or a soloist. Try to perform in three parts without any accompaniment so that the learners listen very carefully to the sound of the three part harmony. You might find it helpful to tap the pulse on a percussion instrument, learners should concentrate on their accuracy of rhythm and intonation.
- Try to vary the performance. For example, begin with a solo voice in Verse 1, duet/trio in verse 2, and the whole class in verse 3 and 4. After experimenting with different vocal textures, try to vary the dynamics in different sections of the song. For example, begin with quiet dynamics, crescendo (gradually getting louder) into the second half of the verse, and sing the last phrase forte (loud)
- Attempt to sing all of the song in Welsh (using lyrics and interactive screen available on the Welsh side of the website).

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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 and appraise other recordings of Welsh Folk Songs, discuss the main characteristics, listen to the lyrics and discuss the story. 'Calennig', one of Wales' foremost traditional folk music groups, released a recording of this song in 1994 on the album 'Trade Winds: Gwyntoedd Môr Hafren'. Listen to and appraise this recording and discuss its main characteristics and features.
- Divide learners into smaller groups and ask each group to compose its own folk song. Limit the melody to triadic movement mainly – C E G with occasional passing notes using D and F, and encourage learners to create catchy lyrics using a similar theme to 'The Holly' and rhythms. Give them all an opportunity to perform to the other groups, and appraise each other's performances.
- Teach another Welsh folk song, e.g. 'Ar lan y môr' ('On the seashore'). When learners are familiar with this, they could compare both folk songs and comment on structure, texture and pitch.

Assessment for Learning:

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

Questioning

Tool: No hands-up approach

- Explain in your own words the story behind the lyrics.
- Give me an example of one of the rhythms introduced in this song.
- How many beats are there in each bar? (4) On what beat does the melody start? (4th)

Feedback

Tool: Comments only

Give feedback to specific groups on their attention to changes in pitch. You may need to demonstrate the move to the high register of the voice in the descant part or the high 'D' notes that appears in the second phrase, the octave leap (7 notes) in the last phrase and the use of leap triadic movement in the melody.

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. eg:

- Was the melody, harmony or descant the hardest part to learn? Why?
- What do you like/dislike about this song? Explain your answer.