

When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again

Broad Description - Traditional Civil War marching song

Background Information

Some believe the tune of this well-known icon of Civil War music is that of the Irish antiwar song "Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye" which is presumed to be the original based on oral evidence. The lyrics of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again" were written by Irish-American bandleader Patrick Gilmore in 1863 and express longing for the safe homecoming of loved ones from the war. They are the reverse sentiment of "Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye", in which Johnny returns home blind and crippled to the young wife and child he left to join the army. Quite a few variations on the song, as well as songs set to the same tune but with different lyrics, have appeared since.

Analysis/Elements of Music

Melody –

E minor – octave range m, - m

Harmony-

Falls outside of traditional folk music harmony. Major III chords create excitement in unpredictable harmonic underpinnings for the young ear.

Form-

AAvBC

Rhythm-

6/8 meter performed as a duple march beginning with an eighth note pickup

Texture –

Melody with accompaniment

Skill outcome:

Students will recognize the expressive element of accent and produce it in the voice through use of extra energy in the tone and diaphragmatic “singing muscle” action.

Knowledge outcome:

Students will identify the musical concept of anacrusis (pick-up, up-beat) in familiar and unfamiliar simple melodies.

Affective Outcome:

Students will manipulate musical elements (tempo, dynamics, accents) to reflect a new emotional standpoint in a familiar song.

The Heart

What attracted you to this piece? The timeless appeal of this familiar minor melody and the atypical harmonic structure creates a mental image that has intrigued me since childhood. The important historical context and rich academic integration potential makes it attractive on many levels.

What maintains my interest now? There are so many musical and emotional elements to explore in this piece. It can be experienced and enjoyed on a simple level by very young learners and is complex enough to be satisfying for older children who need to delve into more advanced musical concepts. The added richness of presenting the earlier antiwar version allows children to experience two sides of a compelling societal issue.

What gives the music its distinctive qualities? The driving march-like rhythm creates a natural movement opportunity. The minor melody is represented appropriately for both a spirited march and soulful ballad.

How has the composer created your response through compositional devices? The natural rhythmic force of the march, the energy created by anacrusis, the intention of well-placed accents as well as somewhat unpredictable harmonic underpinnings gives the piece special interest.

Heart Statement

The heart of this piece is in the natural accent provided by percussive exclamations and continuous rhythmic drive. The minor melody is equally authentic in both joyful celebration and somber reflection.

Introducing the Piece

Begin by marching in place with no musical accompaniment. Invite students to join in marching while playing “When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again” chord progression accompaniment in a strong marching tempo and style. Comment on what you interpreted their response to be, i.e. “That really had a lot of energy” “You moved like one person”, etc. Ask what are typical situations/events in which one would see people march. Elicit responses regarding concepts of unity and expression and write key words from responses on board.

Skill outcome: Students will recognize the expressive element of accent and produce it in the voice through use of extra energy in the tone and diaphragmatic “singing muscle” action.

Begin to relate historical background of the piece emphasizing the wartime popularity of the melody and lyrics as it served to unite and energize the populace. Indicate the students will learn another version that elicited a decidedly different response. Sing the first verse using the expressive element of accent in an obvious way.

Warm-up on scale and melodic patterns from the song.

Solfège warm ups:

- mi, - la,
- mi, -mi. -la,- la,- la,
- la, - ti, - do
- do – la, - so,
- sol, – mi, - sol,
- do – re - mi

A. Strategies

1. Students listen to isolated section in the musical phrase where accent naturally occurs and relate it to an *exclamation point* in language.
2. Students use alternate language to reproduce accent i.e. “Whoo-Hoo!” instead of “Hurrah!” and practice sense of quick expulsion of air and diaphragmatic bounce.
3. The students sing the same musical section intentionally *not* producing an accent. Share how it made the music sound and feel different – determine level of satisfaction.
4. Use physical action of hand movement to represent notational symbol of accent.

Explain to students they will learn how to use their singing muscles to bring out the tone and words in an explosive way to make an exciting sound and that in music we use the term **accent** to indicate this. Teach them what the notational symbol looks like and how to represent it with their hand. Sing again emphasizing the expressive element they have learned.

Discuss and experience how the piece would feel different if accents were not present. Sing song without the accent and compare the effect.

B. Assessment

1. Have half of the students in the class lie on the floor and sing “Hurrah” on pitch. Other half watch to see if physical action to produce accent is noticeable and share feedback.
2. Sing familiar and unfamiliar melody on loo with accents marked and visually/aurally observe to validate skill level.
3. Sing “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” as class and do group assessment of achievement by class rating. Why is there an accent on every strong beat in the last phrase?
4. Use rubric for students to self-assess whether and to what degree the target was achieved.

Check Point: Accent

Name _____ Class _____

3

2

1.

I used my singing muscles and energy in the words to make an accent on the right notes in the song	I sort of used my singing muscles and energy in the words to make an accent on the right notes in the song	I did not use my singing muscles or energy in the words to make an accent on the right notes in the song
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5. When students perform the song the next class period, do they remember to perform it with expression? Check on seating chart assessment form to see if the same children are having trouble.

Knowledge outcome: Students will identify the musical concept of anacrusis (pick-up, up-beat) in familiar and unfamiliar simple melodies.

After students are familiar with the song convey that certain aspects of the rhythm that give the song special character will be explored. Chant or sing only the downbeat of each measure in first phrase in overt way allowing the children to “inner hear” the missing pieces.

Show the notation of the 1st phrase and have students perform on rhythm words. Practice this with the class.

A. Strategies

1. Say only down beats in phrase or play instrument on strong beat of phrase in an intentionally overt way i.e. “John-” “Rah” emphasizing a simple downbeat feeling. Ask students to analyze with a partner the omissions and what needs to be present to make it ‘fit’ or what comes **before**. (The intention leading students to recognize the strength of the accent is much more effective when anacrusis is performed.)
2. Write the 1st phrase of the song in rhythm notation on the board and underline the first beat in each measure. Students read on rhythm syllables. Have cartoon pictures of pickup trucks or other visually overt image to focus attention on metric position of the anacrusis. Observe students’ placement of the pictures on the appropriate beat.
3. Have students form groups to create a motion physically expressing the anacrusis and down beat of the song. Make the term conscious.
4. Write on board **1. Downbeat 2. After 3. Before**

Question which word is most like an anacrusis and have students signal correct number.

B. Assessment

1. State that everyone's name is either a downbeat or an anacrusis. Students will explore classmate's names to determine which term fits and share as teacher informally observes.
2. Perform short pieces from transparency and have students signal if anacrusis is present.
3. Have students do check point page to students asking them to circle the pick-ups in some well-known songs.

Anacrusis

Check Point:

Circle the **anacrusis** (pick-ups)

B-i-n-g-o

1.



The Farmer In The Dell

2.



America

3.



Affective Outcome: Students will manipulate musical elements (tempo, dynamics, accents) to reflect a new emotional standpoint in a familiar song.

Have students imagine what they would feel like if they were singing the song in a crowd to welcome home the soldiers and their dad, mom, or other loved one was one of those in the ranks. Ask about the emotion with which they'd be singing the song. Introduce the term *affect* and specifically relate choices of tempo, accent placement, and dynamics to the affect that was portrayed.

Sing "Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye" for class after explaining this version was sung from the perspective of a young wife whose husband was forever changed by a painful reality of war. Ask how they might change tempo, accent placement, and dynamics to bring out the different affect in the song.

Em G Em G B7
 Where are the legs with which you run? Huroo, huroo. Where are the legs with which you run? Huroo, huroo.

Em D C B7 Em D C B7
 Where are the legs with which you run when you first went to carry a gun? Indeed your dancin' days are done.

Em B7 Em
 Johnny, I hardly knew ye.

Em G Em G B7
 With your guns and drums and drums and guns. Huroo,.. With your guns and drums and drums and guns. Huroo...

Em D C B7 Em D C B7
 With your guns and drums and drums and guns the enemy nearly slew ye Oh, my darlin' dear ye look so queer.

Em B7 Em
 Johnny, I hardly knew ye.

Vs. 2 Where are the eyes that looked so mild? Huroo, huroo. Where are the eyes that looked so mild? Huroo, huroo.
 Where are the eyes that looked so mild, when my poor heart you first beguiled?
 Why did ye run from me and the child? Johnny, I hardly knew ye.
 With your guns and drums.....

A. Strategies

1. Through contrast/comparison of previous version make the concept of Affect conscious.
2. Have students form groups and decide how to use Orff instruments and hand drums to play accompaniment. Barred instruments play the chord root.

B. Assessment

1. Observation of participation level in group composition activity.
2. **Check Point: Affect** Name _____ Class ____
 1. How did you modify the following to bring out the **affect** of "Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye"?

TEMPO	
DYNAMICS	
ACCENTS	

3. Which version gave you a stronger feeling or affect?
4. Which version was easier?

