

A Musical Journey

Words and music by Glyn Lehmann

THE SONG

Introduction

The introduction may be performed by the whole group in unison, by a soloist, several soloists in turn, or a smaller group.

The song begins with an explanation of the journey we're about to take.

*Everywhere around the world
There are people making music
Their instruments, their voices
Are raised in waves of sound*

Learning opportunities:

- How sound travels in waves.
- How the voice works.
- How various instruments make their sound eg. percussion, wind, string.

At the end of the introduction is the line – *Be our guide*

This line is repeated throughout the song, each time by all voices. It is the unifying musical and lyrical phrase that reminds us we're on a journey of discovery. Music is the common link.

Verses

Each verse takes us to a new country/continent. There are five verses. I suggest that all voices sing each verse where possible. This gives all the participants an opportunity to experience the diversity of music in the song. The alternative is to divide the whole group into five sections and have each section sing a verse.

In the finale all five verses are repeated, layered upon each other one at a time. At this point it will be necessary to divide the whole group into five sections.

1. Australia

The didgeridoo (also known as a didjeridu) is a wind instrument developed by Indigenous Australians of northern Australia potentially within the last 1,500 years and still in widespread use today both in Australia and around the world. It was traditionally made from the trunk or branch of hardwoods that have been hollowed out by termites. The didgeridoo is played with continuously vibrating lips to produce the drone while using a special breathing technique called circular breathing.



Source: Graham Crumb/Imagicity.com

*Drone, drone, deep, deep drone
Didgeridoo has a deep, deep drone
Down here in Australia
Didgeridoo has a deep, deep drone*

The lyrics of this verse imitate the sound and technique of the didgeridoo. The singers should make each note as long as possible and make a round, resonant sound.

Watch an expert didgeridoo player:

<https://youtu.be/2fORJtyRAC8>

2. India

Konnakol (also spelled Konokol, Konakkol) is the art of performing percussion syllables vocally in South Indian music. Various combinations of these syllables are used to produce rhythms that mimic the sound of the tabla.

1 beat	THOM			
2 beats	TA (tah)	KA (kah)		
3 beats	TA	KI (kee)	TA	
4 beats	TA	KI	DI (di)	MI (mee)

The significance of these rhythmic phrases is that they determine where the accents occur. The accent always being on the first syllable of the phrase. This allows for complex rhythms to be built by combining these shorter phrases.

*Join us now in India
Where rhythm is everywhere
Listen to the rhythm it will
Take you there, take you there*

TA KA DI MI, TA KA DI MI
TA KI TA, TA KI TA
TA KA DI MI, TA KA DI MI
TA KI TA, TA KI TA

It's important to emphasise to the singers the need for clarity and precision. Each syllable needs a crisp attack and the first syllable must always be accented. It's all about energy!

Here is a great example of some Indian children performing:

<https://youtu.be/4Z84CnmymUI>



Source: By L.A. Shively (U.S. Armed Forces) via Wikimedia Commons

3. Ireland

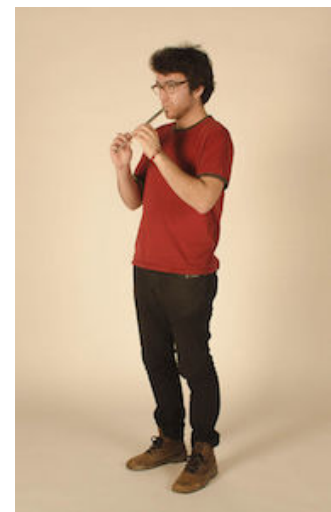
The Celtic music tradition of Ireland, Scotland and Wales has many common elements. The use of the fiddle (violin) and the tin whistle help to define the sound of this traditional folk music. Melody is key to Irish music and the use of harmony is limited. The lead instruments like the fiddle and the tin whistle play in unison. The use of accents within the melodic lines is crucial to give the music its distinctive and lively 'feel'.

*You will hear the fiddle and the whistle
Play a lively melody in Ireland
Dee, dee, dee, dee etc...*

In this song, verse 3 provides a melody to compliment the drone of verse 1 and the percussive nature of the other verses. The singers should strive to make this melody light and bright. Contrast the tin whistle with the didgeridoo. Both are wind instruments but produce very different sounds.

There is a long tradition of playing music together within families in Ireland. Here is a mother and son on fiddle and penny whistle:

<https://youtu.be/rwLSfa5LF98>



Source: Ananian via Wikimedia Commons

4. Brazil

South America is home to a wonderful variety of percussion instruments. One of the more unusual sounding is the cuíca from Brazil. The cuíca is a friction drum that is often used in Samba music. It features a stick that is fastened inside the drum in the center of the drumhead. Changing the pressure on this stick produces different pitches and timbres. It is thought to have originated in Africa and come to South America with the slaves.

Oo, oo, oo, oo, oo, oo, oo, oo, oo
 Cuica is a drum you hear in South America
 Oo, oo, oo, oo, oo, oo, oo, oo, oo
 Cuica is a drum you hear in South America

Performing this verse should be a lot of fun! South American music is energetic and full of life. The idea is to make the sound of the cuica using the voice. It's actually not that difficult because the instrument itself sounds almost human - or perhaps more like a monkey as some suggest.



Source: YouTube

The amazing sounds that come from this instrument:
<https://youtu.be/4rRjQI3ZTZw>

How to make a simple cuica:

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/afterschool/activities/index.php?activity=135>

5. Africa

The final verse brings us to the roots of humankind's desire to create sound and as a result produce what we now call music. Without the need for any external 'instruments' we can make a huge variety of sounds just by using our voices and our bodies. Many cultures use body percussion but the variety of local traditions within Africa have influenced its use around the world.

Closely associated with dance, body percussion includes stomping, hand clapping and slapping the body in such a way as to produce a range of rhythms and sounds. Along with this comes chanting and hollering, all together producing a wonderful exuberance.



Source: <http://kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.ro>

73

 A musical score for a 2-bar phrase. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. The first bar contains a sequence of notes and rests, with accents (>) over the final three notes. The second bar is identical to the first. Below the staff, the following sequence of actions is written: Rstomp Lstomp Rth Lth Rth L/R R/L clap A-fri- ca! Rstomp Lstomp Rth Lth Rth L/R R/L clap A-fri- ca!

Rstomp = Right foot stomp

Lstomp = Left foot stomp

Rth = slap right thigh with right hand

Lth = slap left thigh with left hand

R/L = beat chest on the left side with right fist

L/R = beat chest on the right side with left fist

In a 2 bar repeated phrase, this verse includes all of these elements: stomping, body slapping and thumping, clapping and chanting. Once again, from a performance perspective **energy** is the key!

Finale

Now that we've visited all five countries/continents it's time to put them all together. Each part (or verse) enters one at a time, in the same order as before and continues until all parts are heard.

Part 1 (Australia)	5 times
Part 2 (India)	4 times
Part 3 (Ireland)	3 times
Part 4 (Brazil)	2 times
Part 5 (Africa)	1 time

When all parts are layered they should blend into a wonderfully noisy but coherent sound of a truly 'world music'.

After the 5th time the song ends abruptly with 'Africa!' being the last voice.

Our Musical Journey is complete.

Alternate ending suggestion

Once your students are confident with the song and its parts you could add another repeat or two after the end of the written music (and the backing tracks). At this point all instruments would stop and the singers continue unaccompanied (á cappella). This would be a dramatic ending when used as a performance piece.

THE MUSIC

Apart from the chance for students to use their voices in different ways, this song also lends itself to the use of all kinds of instruments. There is a full score available from the [SongLibrary](#) that allows instrumentalists to accompany the voices. Common school instruments are used.

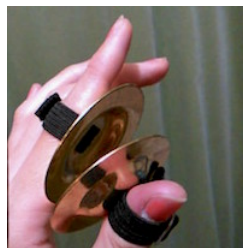
Xylophones and marimba provide a musical 'bed', along with the piano, for the whole song.

Each verse then has an additional instrument from the country/continent relating to it.

1. Australia - sticks (or claves)
2. India - finger cymbals
3. Ireland - bodhrán (or hand drum with beater)
4. Brazil – cabasa (or shaker)
5. Africa - djembe (or other hand drum)



Source: Andrewa via Wikimedia Commons



Source:Gudzwofer via Wikimedia Commons



Source: Hinnerk Rügenapf via Wikimedia Commons



Source: Wikimedia Commons



Source: Djembe Art via Wikimedia Commons

MUSIC (cont.)

The *A Musical Journey - complete* version includes three backing tracks for you to use depending on your needs. These are:

The **full backing** includes the instruments from the full score plus additional instruments/sounds from each country/continent.

1. Australia - didgeridoo
2. India - tablas
3. Ireland – fiddle and tin whistle
4. Brazil – cuíca
5. Africa - stomping, clapping, slapping sounds

You'll notice that these are the sounds being imitated by the vocalists. This will guide them. Before teaching the song you could play this backing track and ask the students to identify the instruments.

The **backing - no percussion** track includes all instruments except the 'live' percussion included in the full score. Use this track if you have students playing these instruments.

Piano only track. Use this as a basic track for learning the song or if you don't have a piano.

I hope you and your students enjoy the journey. I welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Glyn

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Notes

Please note that if using links to YouTube there may be unsuitable language or images used in comments below the video. I have attempted to choose videos without ads, however this may change over time.

Sections of this text derived from Wikipedia.