Jamie Sutta
Founder & Artistic Director
The Children's Voice
www.thechildrensvoice.org

Choral Warm Ups, Selecting repertoire, and activities for Young/Developing Voices

I. Warming up the body
   A. Brain Dance- full body-brain exercise based on developmental movement patterns that help to integrate reflexes that are the foundation for healthy brain development. It is a centering body/brain movement tool for brain reorganization, oxygenation, and recuperation and prepares us for learning and helps with appropriate behavior and social skills.

   B. Help them to create an accurate mental picture of their bodies (Body Mapping)
      1. Show pictures of body and use correct names
      2. Alignment (use phrases like "find your balance," "head pulled up by string," "sit tall," "ears on side of body." Instead of "head straight," "stand up straight," etc.)
      3. Other body exercises- Stretches/tension release- stretch to the sky, arms behind back, shoulder rolls, neck, torso twist, face and shoulder massage

II. Warming up the voice-
   A. Breath- encourage them to become aware of their bodies by *noticing* their breath, place index finger and thumb on bottom of rib cage and top of pelvic bone in order to maintain expansion and avoid collapse.
      1. Hissing exercises
      2. Diaphragmatic exercises (Quick Starts book pg. 27)
   B. Approaches to vocal exercises-
      1. Start with their head voice and descend down their range
         a) Sirens
         b) Head/chest voice (have them feel the vibrations)
         c) Hooting owls
      2. Space
         a) Say "duh"
            (1) Naturally drops jaw into relaxed placement
            (2) Breathe into the space and sing
            (3) Check tongue position (tip should lay on bottom front teeth)
         b) Say "MinneSOta"
            (1) Promotes space
            (2) Brighter, more natural vowels/woofy tone
            (3) Sing passages with that "so" vowel to encourage resonance

3. Resonance
   a) Say "ng"
      (1) Lifts soft palate
      (2) Lead from "ng" to vowel, (zing ah)
4. Warm up ideas
   a) Charlotte Adams Exercises 1, 2a and 2b (attached)- visualization, movement, reinforcement
   b) Choir builders book, connecting movement with warming up the voice- "Stand up, feet apart"

III. Developing the ears for part-singing
   A. Develop independent singing (don't rush this)
      1. Teach your choir to sing beautifully in unison
      2. Encourage opportunities for your students to hear their own voices and sing confidently alone and with others
   B. Solfege scales and activities
      1. Help your students to develop a library of sounds by singing scales, rounds, patterns, etc.
         a) Game ideas: Forbidden pattern game, Solami, echo trains,
      2. Use solfege before text when introducing harmony in music
   C. Choose rounds, canons, partner songs. Also songs with descants and counter melodies like "Yonder Come Day" (attached)

IV. Considerations for selecting repertoire
   A. Know who you are working with- Vocal development, ranges, tessitura
      1. Ranges for elementary aged children (attached)
      2. Create many opportunities for individual assessment
      3. Consider the male changing voice. Here are some facts about boys' voice change:
         a) Every voice is unique
         b) Voice change can begin as early as 9 or as late as 15-16
         c) One part may not fit one voice. Boys may need to sing"excerpts" of parts.
         d) Stages of change can last days or months.
         e) Frustration is common no matter what stage.
         f) Boys need constant encouragement that voice change is normal and indicates they are maturing.
   B. Match repertoire and instruction to the level of your singers
      1. Achievable but still provides some opportunity for growth
      2. Have a combination of rote teaching/score teaching
   C. Concepts within the piece (what can you teach them from this piece of music?)
   D. Other considerations- Style, history, cultural context, text, connection to piece, do **you love it?**

V. Quick focus activities and building community
   A. Zackody Cody
   B. Questions for transitions/student spot lights
   C. Kindness projects
   D. Gimmie one
   E. Double time, and others from "Quickstarts for Young Choirs"
   F. Getting to know you activity- "Find Another Friend to Meet"

Recommended resources:

Warm-ups-
Quick Starts for Young Singers, Cristi Cary Miller & Angela K. McKenna
Choir Builders for Growing Voices, Emily Crocker & Rollo Dilworth
Daily Workout for a Beautiful Voice, Charlotte Adams
Working with Adolescent Voices, John M. Cooksey

Body Mapping- What Every Musicians Needs to Know about the Body, Barbara Conable

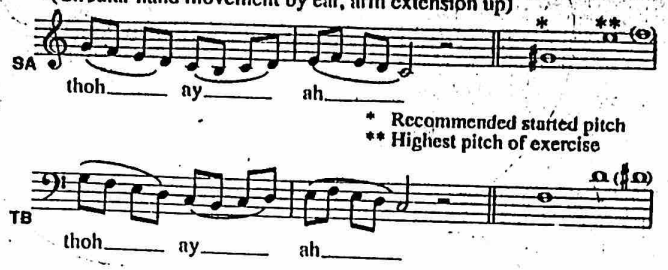
Community building- Ice Breakers, 60 Fun Activities that Will Build a Better Choir, Valerie Lippoldt Mack

Other-
'Round We Go, Elizabeth Gilpatrick
150 Rounds for Singing and Teaching, Edward Bolkovac and Judith Johnson
We Will Sing! collection, Doreen Rao

From Daily workout for a Beautiful voice – Charlotte Adams

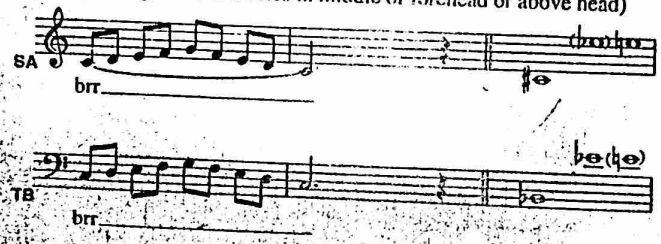
Vocal Workout Exercises

I. 1. Resonance, air flow
(Circular hand movement by ear, arm extension up)

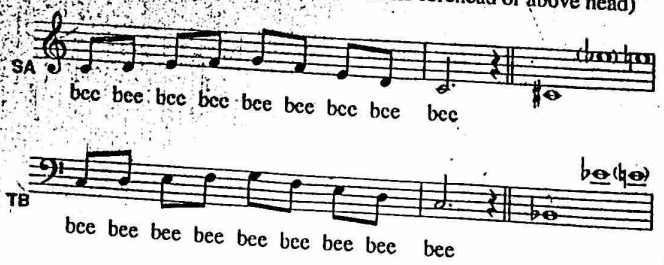


* Recommended started pitch
** Highest pitch of exercise

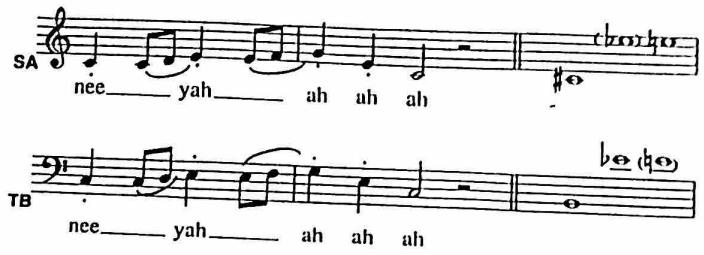
I. 2a. Resonance, engagement of diaphragm, relaxation of facial muscles
(Index finger draws circles in middle of forehead or above head)



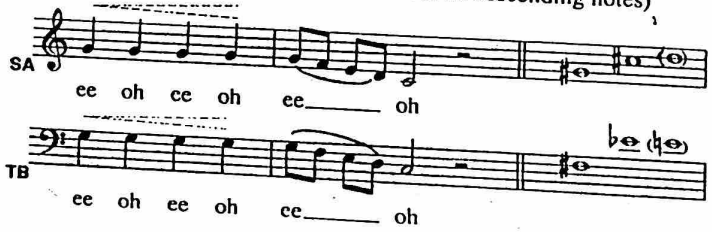
I. 2b. Resonance, relaxation of facial muscles
(Index finger draws circles in middle of forehead or above head)



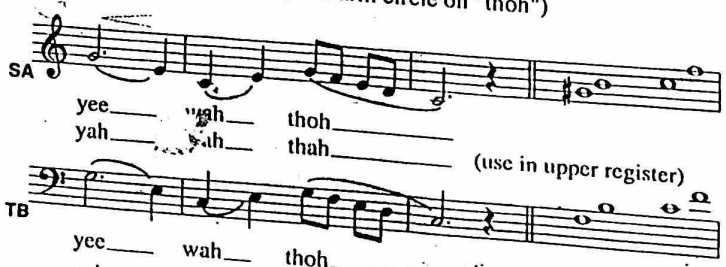
I. 3. RELAXATION, resonance
(Brush cheeks with thumbs in upward motion
Bounce hands at hip level in high register)



II. 4. Resonance, sustained breath support, unified vowels
(Lifted circle by ears, upward movement on descending notes)



II. 5. Breath stream, resonance, relaxation
(Big circle with one arm; two arm circle on "thoh")

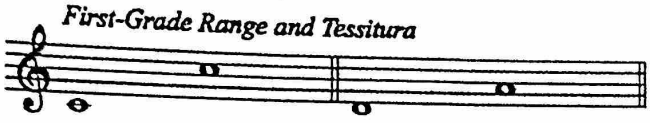


(use in upper register)

(use in upper register)

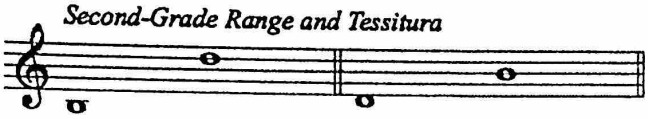
Figure 2. Ranges and Tessitura for Elementary-Aged Children

First-Grade Range and Tessitura



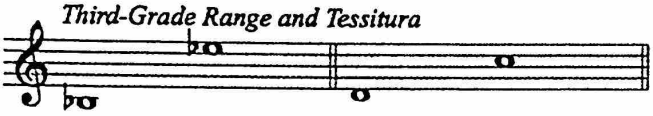
Range: C4 - C5 Tessitura: D4 - A4

Second-Grade Range and Tessitura



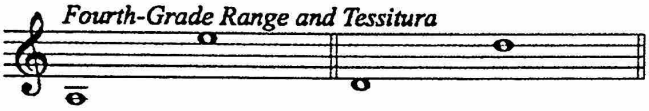
Range: B3 - D5 Tessitura: D4 - B4

Third-Grade Range and Tessitura



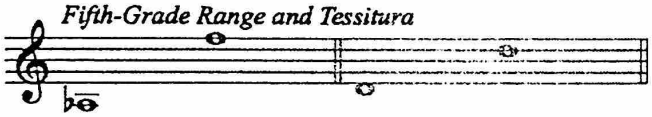
Range: Bb3 - Eb5 Tessitura D4 - C5

Fourth-Grade Range and Tessitura



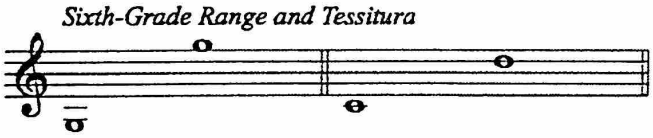
Range: A3 - E5 Tessitura D4 - D5

Fifth-Grade Range and Tessitura



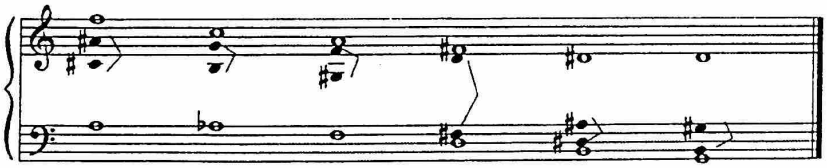
Range: Ab3 - F5 Tessitura D4 - D5

Sixth-Grade Range and Tessitura



Range: G3 - G5 Tessitura C4 - D5

Changing Voice Ranges (Cooksey)



Unchanged	Stage I Midvoice I	Stage II Midvoice II	Stage III Midvoice IIA	Stage IV New Baritone	Stage V Settling Baritone

Cooksey, J. (1999). *Working with Adolescent Voices.* Concordia Publishing House

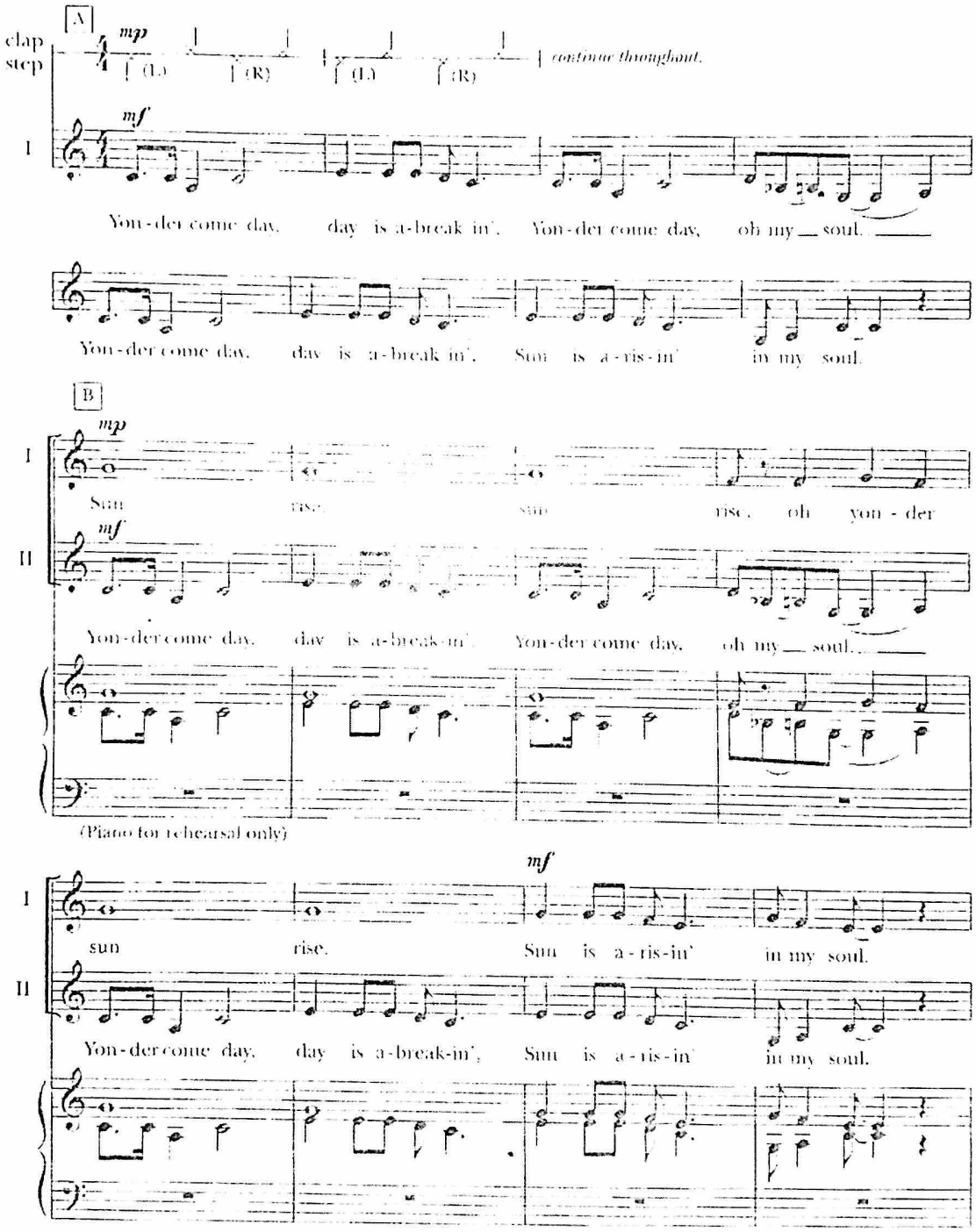
Yonder Come Day

Based on the traditional Georgia Sea Islands Spiritual
Three parts A Cappella

Transpose into any key desired

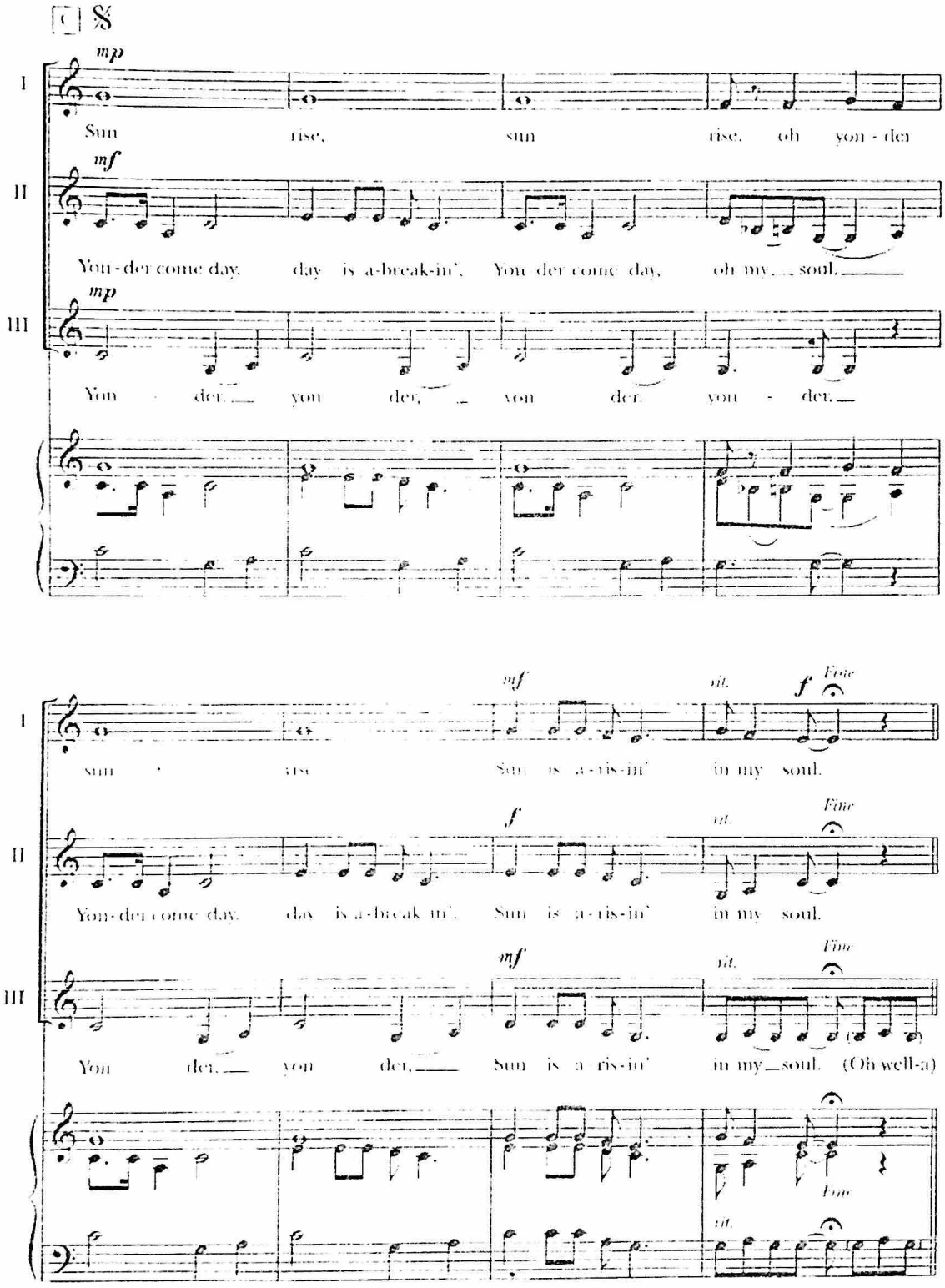
Additional Words, Music and Arrangement
Judith Cook Tucker

Performance hint: Begin with step/clap/sway for two measures.
Sing melody once or twice through in unison before layering in parts.



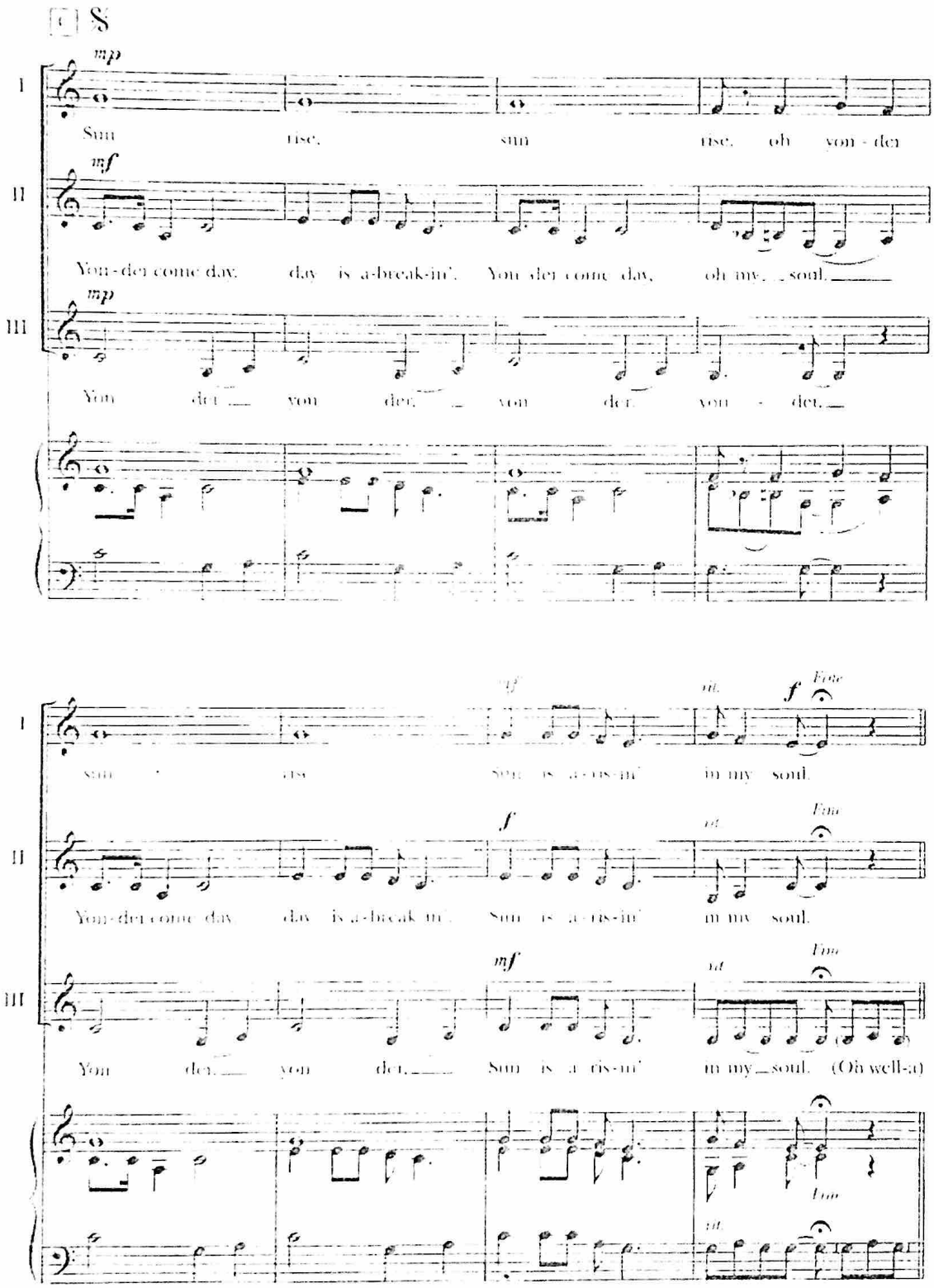
© 1985 Judith Cook Tucker
© 2000 Assigned to Plank Road Publishing, Inc.
International Copyright Secured • All Rights Reserved

Yonder Come Day



Go on to Rhythmic Speech Ensemble on next page…

Yonder Come Day



Go on to Rhythmic Speech Ensemble on next page…

D

Speak clearly with strong rhythm

I: *mf* Trees are green and the air is sweet. The

II: *mp* (clap) (clap) (clap) (snap) Walk that road.

III: *p* Yon - der come day, day is a - break - in',

I: good earth is sing-in' un-der-neath my feet. I'll point my feet down that

II: (clap) (clap) (clap) (snap) (clap) (clap) Walk that road. Walk that

III: Yon - der come day, oh my soul. Yon - der come day.

D.S. al Fine

I: free - dom line. Walk - in' that road I'm feel - in' fine. Yeah!

mf — *f*

II: (clap) (snap) (clap) (clap) (clap) (snap) road. Walk that road.

III: day is a - break - in', Sun is a - ris - in' in my soul, oh well - a

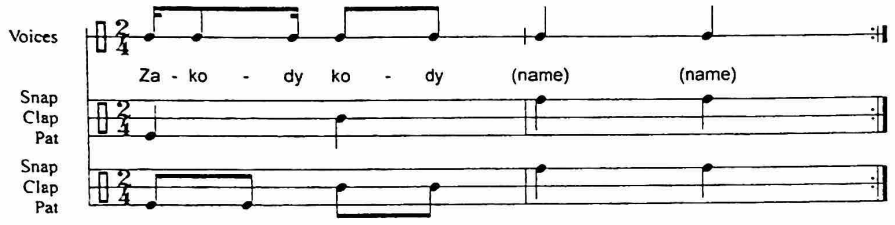
Performance hint: *Return to Section C, perhaps with audience encouraged to join in on melody, repeat as many times as desired. On last repeat, ritard at final two measures and hold last note. Basses, if any, may drop octave on last note.*

Zackody Variations

rhyme as learned from unnamed mentor

Seated in circle, students speak rhyme and perform beat-based BP ostinato by imitation; ID space for two names on snaps, practice inserting first names of each neighbor in circle/rows.
All speak "Zackody – kody" text, individuals speak names of neighbors in turn all the way around circle/rows.
When appropriate, switch to rhythmic ostinato as scored below with divided beat.
Move to new seats and play with new neighbors as desired; repeat, using neighbors' last names; middle names.
Ensemble Challenge – use metronome to identify fastest tempo at which entire group can speak names in time.
Variations – becomes a listening activity. Insert each of the following in the game during the snaps:

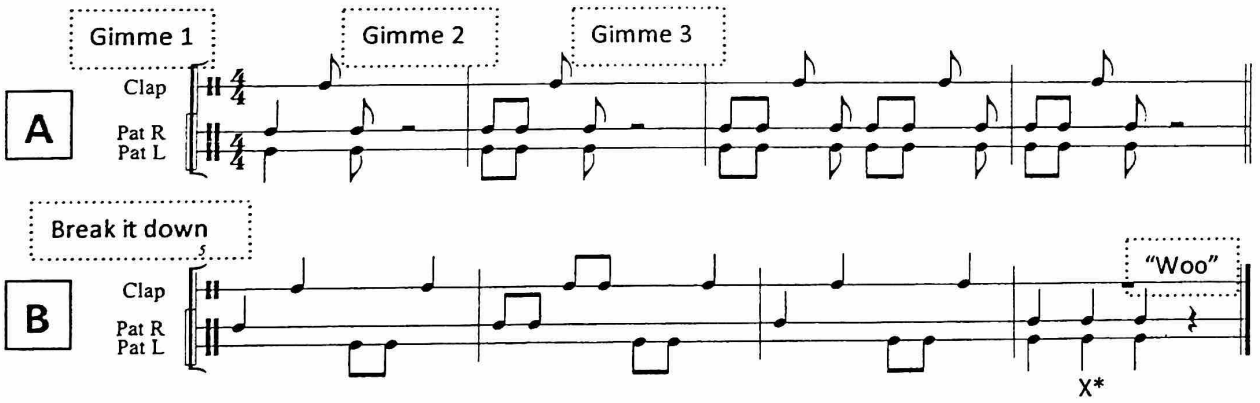
- Initial of neighbors' first name; initial of last name; first initial of one neighbor/last initial of other neighbor; after completing round of game, Ss ID meaningful pairs of letters that they heard: doubles (BB); consecutives (BC); words (BE, AT); abbreviations (states: MN, AZ; cities: L A, N Y; other: JR, MS, AM); their own initials (JB)
- Find out a favorite of each neighbor and insert into blank: colors, candy, food, game, cartoon character, choir song, musical instrument, movie, sports team, dynamic marking, etc.
- Role play categories: each neighbor adopts a "persona" from the day's category and shares it with their neighbor; insert that into the blank. Categories might include: pop singer; sports team; super hero; monster; movie star; other famous person, famous choral composer/musician, etc.)



Gimme 1, 2, 3, Break It Down

origin unknown; various internet sources

Perform each rhythmic phrase in succession in unison, then half play A/half play B (or play in canon), then return to unison.



*Cross arms to opposite knee

all about me.

I AM AMAZING!

MY PORTRAIT

MY NAME IS _____

I AM _____ YEARS OLD.

MY BEST FRIEND IS _____

MY FAVORITE COLOR IS _____

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL IS _____

I LIKE TO EAT _____

I LIKE TO DRINK _____

I LIKE TO WEAR _____

MY FAVORITE MOVIE IS _____ & TV SHOW IS _____

MY FAVORITE BOOK IS _____

I LIKE TO PLAY _____

I ALWAYS LAUGH WHEN _____

I AM GOOD AT _____

I AM AFRAID OF _____

I AM SMART BECAUSE _____

WHEN I GROW UP I WANT TO BE _____

SIGNATURE

DATE

1. What do you like daydreaming about?

2. What makes you happy?

3. What have your friends been up to?

4. If you could do anything right now, what would you do?

5. What do you look forward to when you wake up?

6. Do you ever think about renaming the colors of your crayons?

7. What character makes you laugh the most?

8. If you opened a store, what would you sell?

9. What's your Superhero name and what powers do you have?

10. You're at the beach. What's the first thing you do?

11. If you could grow anything in the yard, what would it be?

12. What makes you feel brave?

13. What makes you feel loved?

14. How do you show people you care?

15. What does it feel like when I hug you?

16. If your stuffed animals could talk, what would they say?

17. If you could give $100 to a charity, which would you choose?

18. How would you design a treehouse?

19. What do you enjoy giving people?

20. Did you smile or laugh extra today?

21. If you wrote a book, what would it be about?

22. If you drew everything that came to your head, what would you be drawing right now?

23. If you designed clothes, would would they look like?

24. How do you best like helping others?

25. Pretend you're a chef, and tell me about your restaurant. What foods do you serve?

26. What do you think you're going to dream about tonight?

27. What makes you feel thankful?

28. Where would you like to travel? How would you get there?

29. What sounds do you like?

30. If you made a cave in the woods, what would be inside it?

31. If you could ask a wild animal any question, what would you ask?

32. You're outside for a whole day: what would you do?

33. What makes the best fort?

34. What makes you feel energized?

35. If you were in a play, what would your character be like?

36. How do you think animals communicate?

37. What are some of the best things about nature?

38. You're a photographer for a day, what would you take pictures of?

39. What's a memory that makes you happy?

40. What bugs you?

41. Describe a great day. What are you doing that makes it special?

42. What animal would make a great driver?

43. What makes your friends so awesome?

44. What makes you so awesome?

45. Do you have any inventions in your brain?

46. Do you think it'd be fun to learn another language?

47. What are three things you want to do this summer?

48. If you could make up a new holiday, what would it be?

49. What makes someone smart?

50. If you had friends all over the world, how would you keep in touch?