



The United States Army Field Band

The Musical Ambassadors of the Army
Washington, DC

The Legacy of Gilbert and Sullivan *High School Lesson Plan: The Patter Song*

OBJECTIVES:

1. Introduce concept of "Patter Song"
2. Develop consistent, correct, and efficient diction for singing
3. Learn and perform difficult, fast rhythmic figures alone and in groups
4. Sing solo and four-part harmony in "In Enterprise of Martial Kind"
5. Create and perform original lyrics using "In Enterprise of Martial Kind"

PROCEDURES:

1. On board, have written with rhythmic notation above the syllables: "In the first and foremost flight, ha ha! You always found that knight, ha, ha! That celebrated, cultivated, underrated, nobleman, The Duke of Plaza Toro!" from "In Enterprise of Martial Kind." In addition, and on separate part of board or room, write the palindrome "Sit on a potato pan, Otis."
2. As students enter class, have playing "When I, good friends, was call'd to the Bar" from Gilbert & Sullivan's Trial by Jury from The Legacy of Gilbert and Sullivan.
3. Begin by talking about "Patter Songs" and use well known tongue twisters like "Peter Piper" to collectively have class recite. Increase tempo, but insist on correct, crisp diction. Encourage bolder students to do impromptu solo of the tongue twister, increasing in speed. Winner is student who can recite the fastest while still being understood.
4. Vocal Warm-up: "Sit on a potato pan, Otis" This is sung on the scale Do through So and back to Do three times with one syllable per note. This forces students to sing with off-syllabic stress. Increase speed and reiterate good diction techniques.
5. Begin collectively reciting "In the first and foremost flight, ha ha! You always found that knight, ha, ha! That celebrated, cultivated, underrated, nobleman, The Duke of Plaza Toro!" very slowly with metronome. According to class level, begin with first four bars and expand to whole passage. Stress perfect diction and listen for tall, uniform vowels. With the metronome, increase speed slowly and recite (even faster than what is marked on score!).
6. According to level of students, ask students to sing the melody (with or without harmony as they are able). Using music, first sing slowly and increase with metronome. Reiterate singing diction techniques such as quick, crisp consonants, reduced jaw involvement, and a relaxed base of tongue.
7. Divide students into groups of 3-4. Give them 10 minutes to create and prepare alternate lyrics for the line "In the first and foremost flight, ha ha! You always found that knight, ha, ha! That celebrated, cultivated, underrated, nobleman, The Duke of Plaza Toro!" There should be a syllable for each written note. You could use a theme like "Homecoming" or a movie or current event. They will perform the composition for the class at the end of the ten minutes!
8. Engage students in critical listening of their compositions: "Were the lyrics understood? Was it fast enough to be a patter song? Did they use one syllable per note correctly? Were the lyrics clever and/or descriptive?"
9. Finally, the students vote for the best patter song and reward them by having them sing "In Enterprise of Martial Kind" (including solos) in front of everyone! Have them sing along with our recording on The Legacy of Gilbert and Sullivan.

ASSESSMENT:

1. Did the students sing correct rhythms and words at fast tempo?
2. Did the students have understandable diction?
3. Did the students demonstrate understanding by composing their own "Patter Song?"

NATIONAL STANDARDS:*

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.