

# 41 O hush thee my baby

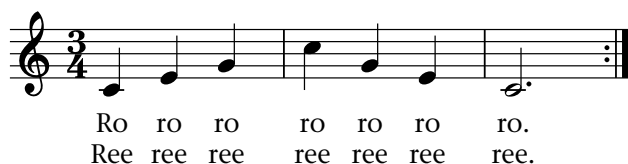
RESOURCES ▶ CD2 track 5 ▶ Warm ups: Nos. 15, 16a, 17, 18, 22, 26

## Information

This is a traditional Highland cradle tune collected by Hugh S. Robertson in the 1950s. The chorus words 'caidil gu Lō' (pronounced 'cad-jil goo law') mean 'sleep till dawn'. The attraction of this song is its unusual melody with a range greater than an octave. It is arranged for mixed voices (SATB), which can just about be taught by rote, but access to the music may help some people. The verse words are archaic, but have interest as an example of a historical genre. To quote Hugh Robertson: 'If you are right in the heart of your song, depend upon it you will sooner or later find yourself right in the heart of the place and people whence the song came' (*Songs of the British Isles*, 1950).

## Starting

- Warm up with plenty of arpeggios, as every voice has to sing them, particularly the sopranos.
- Establish a moderate three-in-a-bar pulse, perhaps with some body swaying to help the motion of a cradle, and sing this arpeggio exercise, alternating the words and going up by a semitone each time:



- Develop the arpeggio pattern by singing the first four notes of the song ('Oh ho-ro ee-') to establish the octave jump.

## Teaching and rehearsing

- Teach the first four bars of the melody, encouraging singers to feel it as one continuous line which joins the first and last words. Don't identify or make an issue of the large leaps! Increase the sound through the first bar into the second, this helps the momentum. The vowel sound on 'ee-ree-ree' should not be too pinched and smiley; keep the mouth slightly open so it sounds like 'i-ri-ri'. This will help tone quality and pitch.
- The next four bars (5–8) start in the same way: tackle these next.
- Add the harmony parts to the chorus, then everyone can sing. This will help with the verses later. Begin with alto, as it starts and ends the phrases with the soprano. Then add the bass, which has the same phrase twice. Finally add the tenor line, which almost repeats as well.

- The last chorus, or coda, is very similar to the opening chorus but bar 17 is unison, and bar 20 has a variation in the harmony to create an interrupted cadence.
- For the verses, teach the melody first. The crotchet-only rhythm could make this sound rather wooden, so encourage a lilting feel, using the words to help with expression.
- Add the bass-line next; it has a repeated pedal note, then rises up a scale in a consistent pattern which should make it quite accessible.
- Next should come the tenor and alto, in that order; then try them together.

## Ideas

- To ease the pressure of learning everything in one go, once the chorus is confidently known sing through the whole piece, with the leader (or a competent soloist) taking the verses. This gives a feeling of continuity and some sense of achievement, and it will help to teach the verse melody, as everyone hears it in context three times.
- To help smooth the passage of the chorus melody at the beginning, try isolating two short motifs (i.e. 'O ho-ro ee'—as in the exercise above—then 'ee-ree-ree cai-') before putting them back together.

## Listen out

- Check carefully that everyone breathes where marked. Bar 8 needs particular attention: alto, tenor, and bass need to breathe with the sopranos as if they were going on to sing the next phrase. Decide how long the note on 'dawn' is to be. Bar 12 is even more crucial, because in verse 1 if the end letter, 't', is not together it will be obvious!

## Performing

- The words dictate the order of events, so the main decisions for performing are the style and some dynamic contrast. This is a cradle song so it should be suitably calm and soothing.
- On the CD the melody is highlighted in verse 2: alto, tenor, and bass sing 'loo'. Humming is possible, but this can be difficult for younger voices. Why not try a solo voice or two?
- Keep the verses flowing; don't let the lack of rhythm make it stodgy.

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OXFORD

# 41 O hush thee my baby

Scottish folksong  
arr. Peter Hunt

Gently ♩ = 88  
Chorus

Musical score for the chorus, featuring Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), and Tenor/Bass (T.B.) parts. The music is in 3/4 time and begins with a tempo marking of 'Gently' and a metronome setting of 88. The lyrics are: 'O ho - ro ee - (ree)-ree cai - dil gu Lō, O ho - ro' (S. line), 'O ho - ro ho - ro sleep till dawn, O ho - ro' (A. line), and 'O ho - ro sleep till dawn, O ho - ro' (T.B. line). The score includes a first ending bracket over the final two measures of the chorus.

Musical score for the verse, continuing from the chorus. It features Soprano (S.) and Tenor/Bass (T.B.) parts. The lyrics are: 'ee - (ree)-ree cai - dil gu Lō. Verse' (S. line), 'ho - ro sleep till dawn. 1. O hush thee my ba - by, thy' (A. line), and '- ro sleep till dawn.' (T.B. line). The score includes a first ending bracket over the final two measures of the verse.

Musical score for the second line of the verse, continuing from the first line. It features Soprano (S.) and Tenor/Bass (T.B.) parts. The lyrics are: 'sire was a knight. Thy mo-ther a la - dye both gen - tle and bright.' (S. line) and 'sire was a knight. Thy mo-ther a la - dye both gen - tle and bright.' (T.B. line). The score includes a first ending bracket over the final two measures of the line.

2. O hush thee my baby, the time soon will come  
When thy sleep shall be broken with trumpet and drum.
3. Then hush thee my darling, take rest while you may,  
For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.

17 Last chorus ✓

O ho - ro ee - (ree) - ree cai - dil gu Lō,  
 O ho - ro ee - ree sleep till dawn, \_\_\_\_\_

O ho - ro ee - ree sleep till dawn, \_\_\_\_\_

21 **rall.**

O ho - ro ee - (ree) - ree cai - dil gu Lō.  
 O ho - ro ee - ree sleep till dawn.

O, O sleep till dawn.