

# Hearts, Hands and Voices

## Program Notes

Throughout our school concert, you will hear some of the important aspects of our music program. All grade levels will sing one song a cappella (without accompaniment) and grades 1 through 5 will sing a cappella and in more than one part. A cappella singing is the most successful way to develop a child's ability to match pitch, and sing with good technique. This method helps the child hear the music without outside assistance. Part-singing develops musicianship through the singer's ability to blend and sing independently. No fingers in the ears allowed!

You will also see movement throughout the concert. Movement teaches expressiveness, creativity, and many students respond to music through movement.

The students are exposed to a variety of cultures and genres and become more comfortable with differences among us. Their songs are infused with surprises as they learn how to bring music to an audience through the senses, to make the audience laugh, cry, and be surprised.

Finally, the spirit of joy is encouraged and the children participate in the concert with both the challenges and expectations of a high level of skill and the safety of knowing they are loved and respected for each and every one of their efforts.

### Kindergartens

The kindergartens begin with a Korean song, *Santoki*, that was brought to them by Jiyoung Min, a student teacher from the Berklee College of Music who did her practicum at the Bishop School. Her singing was recorded and enabled the children to hear and imitate the Korean accent. The approximate translation is:

*Mountain bunny, bunny  
Where are you going?  
Bouncing, bouncing as you're running,  
Where are you going?*

"Little Bird on my Window" is a German melody. The rest is a surprise.

*Hey Dum Diddleley Dum* is a nonsense song that allows the children to have fun on stage. It involves acting, which encourages the singers to perform with expressiveness.

### First Grades

The three-part, a cappella song, *A Ram Sam Sam*, is traditionally believed to be

a melodious Moroccan song whose words are sounds that are *onomatopoeias*. This is similar to songs such as the Christmas carol "Lullaby," which plays on the various syllables of the word ("lully -lulla- lully") and the "rat-a-tat-tam" in "The Little Drummer Boy".

*San Sereni* is a song that mimes traditional occupations, common many years ago, among early settlers in Latin American Countries, as well as the United States. Other versions of the song are popular in Mexico and Puerto Rico. The children incorporate aspects of music into the song such as steady beat and acting. The translation is:

*San Sereni of the good, good, life.  
The carpenters (folk dancers, pianists) do like this.  
I like it this way!*

*Angel Band* is a simple counting song with numbers and we decided to show off the young students' ability to chant any kind of rhythm. They first play a straight, western-style rhythm, then switch into an *African hemiola* rhythm that incorporates combination pulses of twos and threes (*additive rhythms*.) They learned the pattern through the use of "ghost rhythms." A little humor completes the song.

## **Second Grades**

The second grade classes open with a three-part canon, *Derry Ding Dong Dason*, in a lyrical style. Although they are singing the three parts by class, they also sing it in three parts in their individual music classes.

Second graders in all the Arlington schools learn about Japan and its culture. With a melding of our own creativity and the Japanese traditional Kabuki theatre, the children strike poses to depict the legend of *Momotaro*. The story follows:

*Momotaro was found inside a giant Peach and on one of his adventures, he set out to rid the country of the terrible oni (ogres) who terrorized the Japanese islands. His mother gave him delicious kibidango (sticky rice balls) for his journey. On the way, he met a pheasant, a dog, and a monkey who all longed for the kibidango and agreed to help fight the oni. They borrowed a fishing boat and traveled to the island of the oni. A huge fortress and gate blocked their entrance along with two oni guards. The pheasant was clever and picked up a small pebble and dropped it on the head of one guard. A fight ensued between the two oni who knocked each other out. All the oni were terrified as the pheasant threw stones at them, the dog nipped at them, the monkey threw fruit at them, and they beheld their fallen comrades. Believing that Momotaro had powerful magic, they fled. That night, as the small group of four slept in a cave, Momotaro discovered gold. The animals only wanted the kibidango so a very wealthy Momotaro and his family provided kibidango for the animals for the rest*

*of their days.*

We welcome Joe Curro, our guest harmonica player, for *Pizza Boogie*. Joe is a member of the Arlington School Committee, a Stratton parent, and has revised his harmonica career for the Hardy community. Thank, you, Joe, for sharing your gift with our students. The children have an opportunity to sing in a blues style, a contrast to their first two songs. They are also free to move to the music. The joy of singing and playing is apparent in this performance. Liz Rosner, our student teacher from Boston University, plays the drum set. Ms. Rosner is a percussionist who also has a special interest in ethno-musicology. She has developed an African unit for the Hardy students, which she will teach to them in the spring.

### **Third Grades**

The third grade classes combine their a cappella singing with recorder playing in the song *Night Song*. This lyrical song requires a gentle, melodious style of playing.

In contrast, *M. C's Boogie*, with its 4-note blues pattern and big-band accompaniment, encourages some jazzy playing. Some of the students will demonstrate their improvisation skills that they learned from listening to the recording. They play anything they want to play as long as it incorporates the notes of the blues pattern. All students are encouraged to improvise as well as read music.

The song, *Woke Up This Morning* is an arrangement of the traditional freedom spiritual. The part-singing combines the melodies from the beginning of the piece so the students can ultimately sing either part. This is important for part-singing skill, to know the other part as you sing your own.

### **Fourth Grades**

The fourth grades will sing their first song, *Easy as Mi, Sol, Do* in four parts. During music classes, they all learned all four parts and have learned about the solfege hand signs and sight-reading as well. Earlier in the year, they experimented with holding a tonic drone while another part sang something else and sang repetitive patterns (*ostinati*) using the tonic (I) and dominant (V) pitches of the key. (Tonic and dominant are the strongest pitches of a scale in Western harmony, tonal.) This enabled them to eventually sing this four-part song that emphasizes the dominant and tonic pitches.

*Edelweiss* is the beautiful song from the musical, *The Sound of Music*. This arrangement calls for a second voice, which is played by our principal, Deborah D'Amico, an accomplished alto recorder player. Her experience as a musician has been an example to the children and a tremendous support to the Hardy

music program.

When one of the fourth grade classes came to music, week after week, Emmett Foster came up to me and said, "Can I conduct the concert?" I like to encourage initiative so I replied, "Why not?" Emmett learned something about conducting and will open the Chassidic round, *Haida*. This classic round is arranged to help a beginning chorus sing together in parts. It also teaches dynamics (volume) and the range of tempos (speed.)

### **Fifth Grades**

Polyrhythm, call and response, cross-rhythms, community playing, learning through imitation of the master teacher; these you will witness in the fifth graders' opening presentation. Hold on to your hats!

*Yonder Come Day* is an example of the a cappella and spiritual music of the Gullah people in the Georgia Sea Islands. This was a part of the United States where African slaves were able to hold onto their traditions due to the slave owners' inability to reside in the swampy, malaria-ridden rice fields of these islands off the coast of the South Atlantic states. The students learn this history and listen to the original version of this song and other Georgia Sea Island *play songs* performed by Bessie Jones and the Georgia Sea Island Singers.

*Tum Balalaika* gives the chorus an opportunity to sing in a pure and lyrical Western style of singing. As with other folk songs of this genre, "Tum Balalaika" uses riddles to generate its verses. The balalaika is a three stringed Russian instrument, "*tum*" representing the strumming of that instrument.

*The Night the Piñatas Came Back* is the ultimate opportunity for the members of the chorus to show their ability to act and to create humor. The origin of the piñata is unclear, but it most closely associated with Mexican culture. Piñatas are used to celebrate holidays and *Cinco de Mayo* (the fifth of May) is a celebration of Mexican heritage and one of its military victories. The arrangement is particularly good at depicting *word painting* (when a word sounds like its meaning) and the chorus has spent rehearsal time leaning how to sing these words effectively. Word painting is also a common tool in literature, especially poetry.