

4 The Zulu warrior

RESOURCES ▶ CD track 5 ▶ Warm ups: Nos. 8, 16, 20 21

Information

This great piece from Africa comprises a chant and a calling song, and appeals to children of all ages. It is also used as a chant at rugby matches. It is made up of two distinct melodic and rhythmic phrases which together herald the arrival of the warrior. The refrain has an infectious melody in the minor key, with a lively, repetitive rhythm, anticipating the warrior's appearance. The verse is in the major key and the vocal style is different—now the words celebrate the arrival of the warrior, with awe and recognition—and there is a greater pitch and rhythmic range.

Starting

- The words of the refrain have satisfying 'z' sounds: 'zzzim-', 'zzzay-', so warm up with some strong 'z's.
- Chant the words of the refrain and clap on each 'z'; this encourages an instant connection between words and actions. Sing to a D drone.
- Warm up with some scales or exercises that will stretch the range a little (over an octave in this song). If you can, finish higher than a D so the pitch on 'See' comes as no surprise.
- Otherwise refrain and verse are simple enough, so get on to the song as quickly as possible!

Teaching and rehearsing

- Teach the refrain and verse separately, perhaps in two separate sessions, so as not to confuse the two. The refrain should be sung with increasing vigour, dynamism, and enthusiasm; exaggerate the 'z's.
- When learning the verse, concentrate on singing the octave leap accurately (sung as you repeat in the verse, and also found between refrain and verse). Encourage a good breath, so singers 'float' the top note.
- Encourage a slight crescendo on 'there' so that the long note doesn't die away.
- Sing through the phrase towards 'warrior' and 'chief'; the first syllable of 'warrior' could have a little triumphant accent. End the verse with an emphatic 'Yo!', and maybe punch the air.
- Concentrate at all times on producing a good tone.

Ideas

- Try the verse as a two-part round, part 2 entering at *.
- Sing the D drone from Starting as a second part in the refrain.
- The children could add actions to the song, as a literal warm-up exercise and to enhance the words.
- For junior warriors try this backing to the refrain, chanted to 'zim' and 'zaya':



(tea, tea, tea, cof-fee, tea, tea, cof-fee, tea.)

Use the words to teach the rhythm if you like.

- With the group sitting cross-legged on the floor, get them to slap their knees on the crotchets and clap on the quavers. Now do this *and* sing!
- Try the same rhythm standing: slap thighs or hips on the crotchets and chests on the quavers.
- Add some accompaniment to the refrain. The piano part has just two chords: D minor and C major. Using the rhythm pattern learnt, try notes from these chords on tuned percussion.

Listen out

- Make sure there is a good tone on the word 'there' in the verse. Focus on an open vowel sound (the 'ere' sounds like the start of 'aeroplane')—lifting the eyes and cheeks will help.
- Make sure that an 'a' doesn't appear on the second 'zay' of the refrain.
- Keep the rhythms accurate and precise.
- Make sure singers distinguish the major and minor of verse and refrain, with the F's and F#s clearly sung.

Performing

- A good performance will be strong with crisp rhythms and words. Consider whether to add any actions or movement.
- Decide how many verses to sing and whether to use any rhythmic accompaniment for the refrain.

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♩ = 124

Refrain Trad. Zulu

f (last time)

Voice

I come a zim-ba, zim-ba za - ya, I come a zim-ba, zim-ba zay.

Piano left hand

Fine

5 Verse *mf* *

See him there, _____ the Zu - lu war-ri - or, _____ See him

8

1. 2. *D.C.*

there, _____ the Zu - lu chief, chief, chief. See him chief, chief, chief. Yo!