

14 Great big house

RESOURCES ► CD track

Information

This is a fun and rhythmically active song which encourages solo singing with confidence. The tune is catchy, with a repetitive melodic pattern. When combined with the 'Simple Simon' rhyme and the pie ostinato it's a charming yet useful piece.

Starting

- Think of types of pies. Start with pies of the traditional sort, such as fruit pies, and see how many your group can name. Don't be surprised if they suggest some unusual ingredients. My group's suggestions varied from mud pies to nose-with-toes pies, favourite football teams, and some other 'icky' non-food items best left to the imagination!
- Next learn the poem 'Simple Simon'. At the end of the poem ask two to four students to say the name of their favourite pie with the rest of the group echoing the pie name. The echoing keeps everyone involved and 'on task' and this can be done freely without worrying about keeping a steady pulse. If a student is unwilling to participate at this point, just move on to the next one.
- Repeat the poem until everyone has had a turn with a type of pie. It doesn't matter if students choose the same pie. You are trying to encourage working in an ensemble, taking turns, and extending concentration time.
- Introduce the song by echo-singing unaccompanied. With each repetition, change the type of pie.

Teaching and rehearsing

- The goal with each repetition is for a different student to sing the final phrase 'filled with _____ pie' by themselves. This can be as simple as just filling in the type of pie, or singing the entire phrase.
- The trick is to keep the flow of singing without having to stop between verses to choose a new solo singer. So, while singing the first part of the song point to a student and give them the 'thumbs up' sign. If they are willing to sing the final line they will give you the 'thumbs up' sign back and sing. If not, they will give you the 'thumbs down', and you can find another willing singer.
- Continually vary the starting pitch to whatever is comfortable for you, then after several repetitions change the starting pitch up or down. This is best done when the song is unaccompanied.

Listen out

- Don't put pressure on yourself or your group. They will become more comfortable singing by themselves in their own time. It's a matter of gentle encouragement and persistence.
- Don't be too picky about matching pitch the first few times you sing this song. I find that often the group will match quite well, and then the pitch will waver when individuals sing. If you are finding this is a problem, try an energetic 'washing windows' (contrary hand circles) movement on the final phrase, as this will help support the tone. Also, check posture!

Ideas

- Change the town name to your own: 'Great big house in Hil - ling - don/Pa - ris, France/near Swake - leys School'.
- Create your own pie ostinato.
- Try some first steps in simple two-part work.
 - Divide your group in two, and do the song and the 'Simple Simon' rhyme together.
 - Try 'Simple Simon' in canon, starting at *.
 - Try the pie ostinato (repeated) with the poem.

Performing

Combine the various elements:

- Start with the pie ostinato twice.
- Now read the poem expressively, with clear diction.
- Next sing the song, with or without solos; four verses work well.
- Repeat the pie ostinato twice.
- End with the poem, repeating the final phrase 'let me taste your wares' several times, gradually getting quieter until the final phrase is whispered, then stop.

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D A7

Great big house in New Or - leans for - ty stor - ies high_____

3 D A D

Ev - 'ry room that I've been in filled with pump - kin pie. (clap)

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for the first two lines of the song. The first line starts with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff with a D chord above the first measure and an A7 chord above the last measure. The lyrics are 'Great big house in New Or - leans for - ty stor - ies high_____'. Below the melody are two staves for piano accompaniment. The second line starts with a '3' above the first measure, indicating a triplet. The melody continues with D, A, and D chords above it. The lyrics are 'Ev - 'ry room that I've been in filled with pump - kin pie. (clap)'. Below the melody are two staves for piano accompaniment.

Poem

Sim - ple Si - mon met a pie - man go - ing to the fair, Says

Sim - ple Si - mon to the pie - man 'let me taste your wares'.

Detailed description: This block shows the poem with musical notation. The first line of music is in 4/4 time and consists of eight eighth notes followed by a quarter note and a quarter rest. The lyrics are 'Sim - ple Si - mon met a pie - man go - ing to the fair, Says'. The second line of music is also in 4/4 time and consists of eight eighth notes followed by a quarter note and a quarter rest. The lyrics are 'Sim - ple Si - mon to the pie - man 'let me taste your wares''. There is an asterisk above the first note of the second line of music.

Pie ostinato

Fudge pie, ap - ple pie, cher - ry pie, yum!

Detailed description: This block shows the 'Pie ostinato' section. It starts with a 4/4 time signature and a repeat sign. The melody consists of a sequence of notes: a quarter note, a quarter note, an eighth note, an eighth note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note. The lyrics are 'Fudge pie, ap - ple pie, cher - ry pie, yum!'. The section ends with a repeat sign.