

12 The Spinner's Wedding

RESOURCES ▶ ▶

■ You need to know

This song relates to the 19th-century textile industry in Dundee. Many women were employed in spinning mills and other factories, partly because employers regarded them as being easier to control—or exploit—than men. However, they were not always completely obedient, and this song illustrates how an imminent wedding might present an opportunity to be defiant; the message is 'you can't be too strict with us today because Jessie's getting married tomorrow'. The song paints a nice picture of a roomful of workers having a song and dance while the gaffer (foreman) stands helplessly by, and its jaunty melody emphasizes the rebellious and celebratory mood. This song was suggested to us by Sandra Kerr and Katherine Zeserson.

■ Warming up

- Do some slow deep-breathing exercises, hissing out the air to control the flow.
- Chant 'the morrow she'll no be here' in the notated rhythm, first whispered and then increasing in volume. Focus on active tongues and lips.
- Sing the warm-up exercise on page 43, starting on different pitches. Try it as a canon, each new part entering at *.

■ Learning

- Encourage the singers to try a Scottish accent and to settle on something manageable and consistent.
- Start with the chorus. Get the group to chant 'Jessie's gettin' married-o' (bars 19–20), in the notated rhythm, several times, then sing it until secure. Divide into smaller groups, each take turns to sing it, then join back together; this should produce stronger singing.
- Sing the third 'hurrah, hurroo a-daddy-o' (bars 16–18) to the group and invite everyone to 'answer' with the final phrase, then get everyone singing both phrases.
- Now teach the first part of the chorus, taking care with the pick-up that starts each phrase. Note that there is a G upbeat at the end of bar 12 but an A in bars 14 and 16, although the phrases that follow are the same each time.

- Sing the verse to the group and invite them to join in with the chorus.
- Teach the verses one at a time, being careful to get the rhythms clear and to make a strong feature of the Scotch snap rhythm, e.g. first beat of bar 30. Once everything is reasonably confident, sing through the whole melody with gusto.
- Next add the harmony part for the verse and last four bars of the chorus. If necessary, break this down into manageable chunks as for the melody. You'll need to make some rhythmic adjustments to the harmony for verses 2–5, but this shouldn't be a problem if the melody and words are really secure.
- There are two ways of accompanying this song: use either the notated piano part on page 46, or create your own accordion or piano accompaniment using the given chords. If using the piano part, note that there are two options provided for the four-part bridge between verses; try alternating between them as you see fit.

■ Listen out

- The upbeats need to be well placed to give a strong sense of the rhythm and to ensure the words are well articulated. Make sure everyone breathes in good time.
- Check that everyone is singing the same rhythm throughout. It doesn't need to be exactly as notated, but it must feel comfortable to the group and be sung together.

■ Creating a performance

- This song works well both in unison and in harmony. Try alternating unison and harmony verses.
- To give singers a breather, the first two 'hurrah, hurroos' in the chorus can be sung antiphonally. Also try different sections of the group, or soloists, taking a verse each.
- Try omitting the chorus between verses 2 and 3 to keep the narrative flow and to add variety.
- Sing the final chorus twice, and cut the last '-o' very short for a strong and energetic ending.

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Scottish
arr. Peter Hunt

Lightly, with energy

(Piano introduction)

Verse 1

3

The gaf - fer's look - ing wor - ried and the flats are in a

8

steer', Jess - ie Bro - die's get - ting mar - ried and the mor - row she'll no be here. Hur -

13

- rah, hur-roo a - dad - dy - o, hur - rah, hur-roo a - dad - dy - o, hur - rah, hur-roo a -

18

- dad - dy - o, Jess - ie's get - ting mar - ried - o!

2. The mar - ried - o!
3. They
4. The
5. Here's best

Verse 2

25

hel - per² and the pie - cer³, they went down the town last night, to

29

buy a wee bit pres - ent just to make her hame⁴ look bright. Hur -

Verse 3

33

bought a chi - na tea - set, aye and a chan - ty⁵ full of salt, a

37

bon - nie col - oured car - pet, a ket - tle, and a pot. Hur -