

16 Migildi, Magildi

RESOURCES

You need to know

'Migildi, magildi' is a Welsh nonsense phrase, and there are quite a number of different songs with this refrain. This version has a very dance-like melody with an unusual rhythmic pattern, changing from 6/8 to 9/8 unexpectedly. Its structure is loosely AABA with tiny variations. It is lovely to sing as written and, given its structure and rhythmic oddities, works surprisingly well as a round. The words belong to a tradition of numerous songs which basically say 'when the impossible happens . . .'. A literal translation of the last line is 'then you can have me'.

Warming up

- Stretch the voices with some lively scale and arpeggio exercises.
- Loosen the lips and tongue with the light *staccato* exercise 1, below (note that 'hei' is pronounced 'high').
- Practise breath control and singing smooth lines with exercise 2. Try it as a four-part canon, with each new part entering after one bar. Raise the pitch so that voices get to sing at least an octave range during the warm-up session.

1
Mi-gil-di, ma-gil-di, hei now, now

2
Mi-gil-di, ma-gil-di, mi-gil-di, ma-gil-di,
mi-gil-di, ma-gil-di, hei now, now

Learning

- If you're singing with non-Welsh speakers, it's best to start by learning the English words. You can always tackle the Welsh later once the melody is really well known.
- Start by teaching the chorus riff in bars 9–10 and 17–18 (both the same) and its slight variation in bars 5–6.

- Sing the song and invite the group to sing the chorus riffs as a response. Use a hand signal to indicate whether the riff rises or falls at the end.
- Next teach bars 3–4, 7–8, and 15–16, then tackle bars 11–14 (the B section), initially without words to focus on accuracy of pitch.
- Aim for a light and delicate sound, keeping the dancing feel to the melody.
- When performed with the piano/harp accompaniment, the song should be sung in unison.
- Also try it as an unaccompanied four-part canon, each part entering at *. Add the backing riffs as a kind of drone.

Listen out

- Not a lot can go wrong with this song, but it can rush, so keep the pulse steady.
- The phrasing is obvious but check that everyone takes a good breath in bar 14 before the last beat ('O').
- Meet the challenge of the high notes in bars 11–14 by keeping the sound light and 'bouncing' off the notes.

Creating a performance

- A suggestion for performance is:
 - 1: unison with piano/harp accompaniment
 - 2: unison unaccompanied with backing riffs
 - 3: four-part canon with or without the riffs, unaccompanied
 - 4: unison with piano and flute accompaniment (provided the pitch remains accurate throughout the second and third times!)
- There is scope for an instrumental solo; the melody is reminiscent of a good fiddle tune.
- Make sure your performance is strong and full of swinging energy.

Backing riffs

Upper voices

Lower voices

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Welsh arr. Peter Hunt
trans. Imogen Holst

Not too fast—steady

Voices

Pan ddaw'r môr i
When the sea comes

Piano or harp

E \flat

4

ben y my - nydd,
o'er the moun - tains, Mi-gil-di, ma-gil-di, hei now, now,——

A \flat /E \flat *B \flat /E \flat* *A \flat /E \flat* *Fm7* *B \flat*

7

A'i ddwy y - myl at ei gi - lydd;
When the de - sert flows in foun - tains, Mi - gil - di, ma - gil - di,

E \flat *E \flat 7* *A \flat /E \flat*