

Banuwa

Traditional Liberian



Grading

Intermediate

About this song

Banuwa is a Liberian folk love song or lullaby.

Banuwa translates as
'don't cry pretty little
girl, don't cry'.

Vocal range

An 8th



Vocal format

Round

Themes/subjects

Liberian/tradition/
geography

Musical elements

Duration and pitch

Musical characteristics

Simple repetitive rhythm
pattern, melody
repeated on different
pitch

Exercises

- ♪ Ask learners to find a partner and decide who is A and who is B. A should make facial and body movements and B should imitate. Start with 'over-the-top' movements and then change to very small subtle movements.
- ♪ Ask learners to stand with their back straight and their feet slightly apart, facing 'five minutes to one'. Learners should: exhale for four beats; breathe in for four beats, feeling the ribs expand; hold and, as they exhale, make a 'hiss' sound like a tyre being emptied.
- ♪ Repeat the two main vowel sounds ('wa' and 'o') to the first note of the song (E); concentrate on creating a consistent sound.
- ♪ Demonstrate the characteristic rhythm of Banuwa:

$\text{♩} = 108$



Ba-nu- wa, ba-nu- wa, ba-nu-wav-o.____

-  Ask learners to clap or say this rhythm.

Recommended CânSing exercises

- Body exercise 1 (Sports warm up)
- Breathing exercise 5 (Vibration)
- Vocal exercise 3 (Don't you just love singing?)
- Vocal exercise 5 (Performing)

Teaching and learning

- 1 Play a recording or sing the round; ask learners to clap or tap the beat/pulse as they listen.
- 2 Start with the melody in unison and sing the first phrase a number of times, if possible, unaccompanied.
- 3 Move to the second phrase and point out to learners that the rhythm is repeated exactly the same, but the pitch is now two notes higher (a 3rd).
- 4 Return to the beginning before adding the third phrase. This phrase is sung on one note, except for the penultimate note, which is half a step lower (semi tone).
- 5 The fourth phrase needs attention to the accuracy of pitch, as it includes two descending leaps, which move down four notes (a 5th).
- 6 When learners are familiar with all the phrases, perform the melody twice; if they are confident, ask them to try to sing the melody unaccompanied.
- 7 Divide the group into two – group A and group B. Explain to group B that they need to join in after the first line – ‘Banuwa, banuwa, banuwayo’; this is eight crotchet beats after group A.
- 8 Ask learners to try to perform in two parts, with or without the recording. Group A should begin and group B should join in at the entry point. Repeat with the other group leading. Support any group by singing its part.
- 9 When you and the learners are confident about singing in two parts, split the group into four smaller groups – groups A to D.
- 10 Demonstrate all relevant entry points and listen to an example performance; give each group a different body percussion sound (clapping, stamping, and so on). Ask learners to perform a rhythmic version of the four-part round, using only body percussion sounds.
- 11 Finally, ask learners to sing the round in four parts without the rhythmic body percussion.

Next steps

- ♪ Learners should move on to sing the round in four parts with the added ostinato phrase. Notice that this phrase begins on an up beat. Split the group into five smaller groups (A to E), and teach the added ostinato pattern to the fifth group.
- ♪ Use this round as a starting point when teaching another round. Compare the similarities and differences between both rounds.
- ♪ Ask learners where they breathe. Encourage them to breathe two phrases at a time and to concentrate on singing through the long vowel sounds.

Performing, composing and appraising

- ♪ Ask the group to try to perform the round on instruments. Give the first note of each phrase/line to learners and encourage them to think about which direction the melody moves in.
- ♪ Introduce the notation at the end of this activity, and try to perform the round in four parts.
- ♪ Ask learners to try to perform, with half the group singing and the other half playing, and then vice versa.
- ♪ Record and appraise the performance. A comparison could be made with the recording provided.

Notes

Assessment for learning and developing thinking

Questioning

Tool: No hands-up approach

- ♪ Ask learners to give an example of one of the rhythms introduced in this song.
- ♪ How could we improve our overall performance?
- ♪ How else can we perform this song?

Feedback

Tool: Temporary comments

Give learners temporary comments on areas they need to develop. To improve their accuracy of rhythm, learners may need to practise clapping the rhythm or perform it as a rhythmic round with body percussion.

Self- and peer assessment

Tool: Two stars and a wish

Make a recording of a group performance of the song. Listen to this recording and then ask learners to suggest two positive comments (the stars) on their performance and one specific improvement (the wish).