



CMP Teaching Plan
Patricia Trump
June, 2019

Title: ***John Kanaka***

Source: ***Shanties and Sailors' Songs*** by Stan Hugel
London: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1969
From The American Folk Song Collection at Holy Names University

Analysis

Broad Description: Work song

Type/Genre: 19th Century American Sea Shanty

Instrumentation/Voicing: unison, unaccompanied

Background Information: Shanties are work songs that were originally sung aboard sailing ships during the 18th and 19th centuries. The name comes from the French word *chanter* meaning *to sing*. ***John Kanaka*** probably dates from the 1830's, the heyday of the whaling industry in the Pacific.

Singing shanties made the work aboard ship less tedious. It helped to synchronize motions like heavy lifting and eased the loneliness of life at sea. There are different types of shanties, each related to the specific task being performed; i.e. capstan shanties for raising the anchor, pumping shanties for pumping water from the bilge, or shanties for the forecabin (the sailors' living quarters) to pass the time during long voyages. ***John Kanaka*** is called a long-pull halyard shanty because it was sung while pulling the halyard, a long rope used to raise the sail.

Shanties were usually in call-response form with the "shanty man" performing the call. Shanty man was a leadership position usually taken by a respected veteran sailor. The shanty man could be counted on to entertain his crew by incorporating humor, bawdiness, and a touch of insubordination into the lyrics, a practice that shares much in common with the songs and cadences of chain gangs, railroad crews and soldiers.

The transition to steam power in the mid-19th century eliminated many of the tasks previously required on sailing ships and the creation of shanties began to wane. Sailors continued to sing their favorite tunes during off hours and as accompaniment for dancing and drinking while in port.

John Kanaka was sung on sailing ships throughout the 19th century in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and takes some of its characteristics from the music of Polynesia. This version is based on a recording made of an unnamed sailor in Barbados, West Indies. It is described as an Anglicized Samoan work song.

Throughout the islands of the Pacific, native people were taken on board sailing ships as casual labor. Sometimes older children were “rented out” to the whalers by their families, and in some cases workers were conscripted into forced labor by captains facing a shortage of manpower.

Native sailors from the Sandwich Islands (the name given to the Hawaiian Islands by the explorer John Cook) referred to themselves as *kanaka*, the Hawaiian word for *people*. Since their full Hawaiian names were long and difficult for Americans to pronounce, the ship’s captain would assign native sailors a new name by combining the word *kanaka* with a common Christian name like John. A ship’s log from that era might include a long list of Hawaiian crew members, all with the name *John Kanaka*.

The use of Sandwich Islanders aboard American ships is recorded in Richard Henry Dana’s book, ***Two Years Before the Mast***. It is based on Dana’s personal experiences working aboard a ship that traveled from Boston to California in 1834. It includes a description of the “Kanakas” who manned the ships that sailed between California and Hawaii. He speaks enthusiastically of their sailing skills, intelligence and good humor. Dana took an interest in their language and describes how they were assigned random names.

The long name of Sandwich Islanders is dropped, and they are called by the whites, all over the Pacific Ocean, “Kanakas,” from a word in their own language which they apply to themselves, and to all South Sea Islanders, in distinction from whites, whom they call “Haole.” This name, “Kanaka,” they answer to, both collectively and individually. Their proper names, in their own language, being difficult to pronounce and remember, they are called by any names which the captains or crews may choose to give them. Some are called after the vessel they are in; others by common names, as Jack, Tom, Bill...

The unwillingness of American captains to give native workers something as simple as the dignity of their own name exemplifies the racism faced by native people during the colonization of the Americas. Elementary and middle school students have a strong sense of fairness and are eager to learn more about stories like this. The text of **John Kanaka** can serve as a catalyst for further research into our country’s long history of suppressing the language and culture of native tribes, immigrants, and African slaves.

Working conditions aboard whaling ships were appalling, even for white sailors. They might be away from home for years, and hunting whales was a bloody and dangerous business. Those who survived to collect their pay quickly learned that the owners, not the workers, reaped the profits. The lucrative trade in whale oil caused an over-harvesting of

whales that decimated their population. **John Kanaka** will inspire students to learn more about the fight for workers' rights and the on-going environmental impact of the whaling industry.

Text: **John Kanaka** is a typical work song with freely improvised verses sung by the shanty man and a refrain sung by the crew. The verses vividly describe the sailing experience with references to distant ports of call, brutal weather, bad food, low pay, harsh punishment, and loneliness.

By studying the text carefully, students will gain insights into life aboard a 19th century sailing ship. They will relish the less appropriate verses and enjoy creating their own. My students were amused to learn that trash talk and complaining about your job isn't anything new.

There is no exact translation of the words in the refrain. *John Kanaka-naka* probably refers to the native sailors who were on board, but the meaning of the words *tu-lai-e oh tu-lai-e* is unclear. Caribbean shanties of the same era sometimes included nonsense words and that may be the case in **John Kanaka**. It's also possible that they represent a bastardization of some unknown Polynesian phrase.

To further confuse the matter; in some recordings the words are pronounced *tu-rye-ay* or *tu-lar-gay* leading Joe Cook from hardtrackers.com to conclude that the words are French. *John Kanaka n'a que tout larguer* translates to *John Kanaka only has to let everything run out*. Since *larguer* in French means to loosen or to play out a rope, perhaps John Kanaka is being called out by his crewmates for not doing his fair share of the work.

Elements of Music

Form: The form of **John Kanaka** is call and response. There are six phrases arranged in pairs: AB A'B CB. Each phrase is eight beats long. The call varies slightly from verse to verse but the response is always the same. **John Kanaka** is one of the few shanties with three pairs of phrases rather than four.

Any analysis of **John Kanaka** must begin with the acknowledgement that the purpose of the singing was utilitarian. The music was derived directly from the task being performed. The structure of the work determined the form of the music. The response exists because sailors had to pull together on the rope to lift the heavy sail. The call allowed them time to rest in between pulls. This alternating pattern, along with the seemingly endless number of verses was typical of long-pull shanties because the work took many hours to complete.

The phrase structure of most work songs was simple and repetitive, but in the case of **John Kanaka**, the more complex task of raising the sail resulted in a more complex form. After the first four phrases, the rope had to stop to give the sailors time to adjust their hands and feet for better leverage. Phrase C is intentionally structured to allow the shanty man to guide this maneuver with his voice. When everyone was set, he would add a vocal

hitch to the end of the sustained note to signal the sailors to prepare to pull again on the next downbeat.

Rhythm: The meter in *John Kanaka* is unusual. Most shanties are in 6/8, but the meter in *John Kanaka* is 4/4. It gives the music a more straight-forward affect, perhaps to reflect the serious nature of the work being done. However, there are recorded versions of *John Kanaka* in compound meter so it's possible that the meter wasn't firmly fixed. Perhaps the amount of "swing" in the rhythm was contingent on the preference of the shanty man or the amount of alcohol consumed by the singers.

There are three rhythmic ideas in *John Kanaka*. The dotted quarter note/eighth note pattern in rhythm A is reminiscent of a trumpet-call, ideal for bringing the sailors to attention. There is a variation in the third phrase (A') where the repeated quarter notes in the second measure are syncopated. If you compare different versions of *John Kanaka* you'll find many small variations like this. Since the solo singer would have to change the rhythm to accommodate his improvised text, the inconsistencies are to be expected and probably aren't musically significant.

Rhythm A: 

Rhythm A': 

Rhythm B creates a powerful accent on the initial word *John* as the quarter note falls on the downbeat and is immediately followed by silence. You couldn't ask for a stronger rhythmic "smack upside the head." The listener can almost imagine the unified grunt of the sailors as they pull the rope together, and I love the energy created by the repeated eighth notes. Even timid singers can't help but join in.

Rhythm B: 

Rhythm B always starts on the downbeat, synchronizing the strong accent in the music with the motion of pulling the rope. Conversely, the solo rhythms A and A' start on an upbeat which is consistent with the natural rhythm of conversational English.

Rhythm C is primarily repeated quarter notes, allowing the melody and text to step to the forefront. It's traditionally performed with a decorative hitch (a sort of wild yelp) at the end of the sustained note that allows the shanty man to guide his workers while simultaneously showing off his vocal prowess.

Rhythm C: 

The contrast between the rhythm in the call and the rhythm in the response is striking. If you take away the melody and text and perform only the rhythm, you'll clearly hear a musical conversation. Since the music was composed to facilitate communication between the shanty man and his crew, that contrast is central to the character of the music.

Melody: The melody is do-centered pentatonic. The range is wide, from low *so* to high *do*. The range provides an appropriate challenge for upper elementary singers, requiring them to use both their head and chest voice. As is traditional in Kodaly notation, the version I'm using is written in the key that best allows the pitches to fit on the staff without excessive ledger lines (F). The teacher is responsible to choose the appropriate key for their students. We will perform it in D.

There are three melodic ideas. Melody 1 has all the characteristics of a fanfare. It encompasses a fifth and is composed primarily of pitches that outline the tonic chord like a bugle call. The rising step-wise motion up to *mi* at the end of the phrase, much like the rising pitch in our voices when we ask a question, leaves the music unresolved. There's a nice moment of anticipation before the answer is given by the response phrase.

Melody 1 (A)

Solo

I heard, I heard the Old Man say,

The response (Melody 2) begins with a resounding accent on *do*, then stepwise motion up to *mi* followed by four repeated notes. When combined with a repetitive rhythm and text, the repeated notes create a staccato, drum-like effect. One can almost imagine the slapping of the ropes on the ship's deck or a military drummer's "call to quarters."

Melody 2 (B)

Group

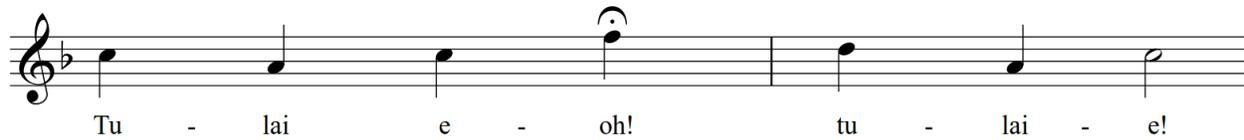
John Ka - na - ka - na - ka tu - lai - e!

Melody 2 ends in convincing style with a leap down to low *so* and back up to *do*. Many versions of **John Kanaka** end with steps instead (*re - re - do*). I believe these versions have been simplified for pedagogical reasons, a common practice in textbook series. The leaps create a less tepid and more rousing ending. A musically interesting melody is especially nice at this point since the rhythm is static.

Melody 3 (C) is the most dramatic and unique in the song. It moves entirely by skip in a classic arch shape. The shanty man can savor those leaps as he sings at his own tempo, almost like a recitative or short cadenza. The melody rises to the highest pitch in the song (high *do*) where this climactic moment is prolonged by a fermata. The soloist holds center stage until the pitch is released with an upward glissando and the melody descends: *la - mi - so*. That small turn upward from *mi* to *so* at the very end is the perfect way to again

create the feeling that a question is being asked, leaving the listener anxiously awaiting that emphatic answer by the final response phrase.

Melody 3 (C)



The melodic components of **John Kanaka** are carefully crafted to tell a story. The contrasts between the call and response phrases create a musical conversation that is so compelling we needn't understand the words of the text to appreciate who is speaking and what is happening.

Harmony: **John Kanaka** is notated in unison and without accompaniment so there is no written harmony. Because the melody is pentatonic, the entire song could be accompanied with a single chord.

In the call phrases there's virtually no underlying harmonic motion since every pitch that falls on the beat is part of the tonic chord save one (*la* in phrase 5). In contrast, the underlying harmony in the response phrase is clearly I-V-I because of the leap from *re* to low *so* on the downbeat of the second measure.

For our performance, we'll add an Orff accompaniment in the elemental style. It underscores the harmonic differences between the solo and response phrases with a pedal tone for phrases 1, 3 and 5 and a simplified I-V-I progression for phrases 2, 4, and 6.

<u>Call</u>	<u>Response</u>
1)	2) V
3)	4) V
5)	6) V

The lack of any harmonic motion in the call gives it a sense of "rootlessness" in keeping with the improvisatory nature of the shanty man's solo, while the traditional harmonic progression of the response is exactly what our ears are expecting. We're reminded that the shanty man may be free to tell his stories and have his fun, but John Kanaka and his fellow sailors are the ones who keep the ship, and the music, from floundering.

Timbre: Historically the timbre would be male voices singing a cappella. When the song was sung after hours, instruments might have been added. On shore, women would have joined the singing. Our performance will include mixed voices, barred Orff instruments, non-pitched percussion (tambourine and drum), and the stomps and claps of the dancers.

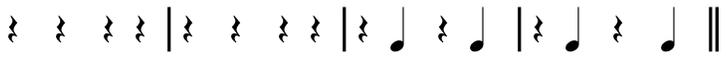
Texture: The texture is monophonic. The alternation between the solo voice and the chorus creates a change in dynamics, but not in the texture. In contemporary recordings and choral arrangements the response is often sung in traditional TTBB harmony. It's

certainly possible that the original sailors improvised harmony parts. At any rate the sailors were hardly trained singers and it's unlikely there was a perfect unison line when they sang together. For our performance the voices will be in unison with the accompaniment adding a bit of textural contrast.

Accompaniment:

BB/BM/BX: 
D tremolo (cola voce) D D A A D

Drum: 

Triangle: 

Expression: The only notated expression mark is a fermata, but it's a meaningful one. The fifth phrase is a wonderful musical surprise that changes what might have been a forgettable song into a classic. The fermata allows the soloist to command the moment like an opera star, and when he finishes the pitch with a comic yelp, it's impossible not to chuckle.

While there are no dynamic markings, the alternation between the single voice and the chorus creates an obvious contrast. All voices should sing forte. We know from history that the singing was pretty raucous since the British Navy at one point banned the singing of shanties because they drowned out the officers when they tried to give orders.

The beat should be steady with an energetic tempo until phrase five where the soloist has free rein to sing rubato. It will be a challenge for the dancers and instrumentalists to follow the soloist's lead.

The downbeat of phrases 2, 4 and 6 requires a strong accent and the chorus must carefully observe the rest. The repeated notes should be crisp and detached while the leap down from *re* to *low so* can be a slide.

Additional Considerations/Reasons to Perform This Composition:

John Kanaka is included in elementary music curricula with good reason. It's rich in history and the text is filled with both humorous banter and dramatic storytelling. It can be taught in grades 3-8 and still be appropriately challenging. It's a marvelous hook for reluctant singers, especially boys, and a great vehicle for teaching full throated, well-supported singing.

John Kanaka inspires a lengthy list of teaching opportunities that can be explored throughout the elementary and middle school years:

- Reading and sight singing in pentatonic (including high *do* and low *so*)
- Reading, writing and performing rhythms with dotted quarter, eighth, eighth rest, anacrusis, and syncopation
- Comparing simple and compound meter
- Expressive elements and marking: fermata, vocal ornaments, accent, staccato, breath marks, dynamics, rubato
- Improvisation
- Solo singing
- Vocal style
- Call-response as a compositional technique
- Phrase structure
- Composing/improvising question-answer phrases
- Contrast/repetition
- Sea Shanties as a genre
- Historical/Sociological connections – ethnic diversity, racial discrimination, exploitation of workers, colonialization, 19th century customs
- Writing connections – creating new verses, story-telling through song, conversation and dialogue
- Science and environmental connections – whaling, endangered species, oceanography
- Team-building, creating a sense of community and camaraderie
- Folk dancing (double circle mixers, do-si-do)

Dance Instructions: John Kanaka Mixer

Formation: Double circle (Traditionally men: outer circle facing in; women: inside circle facing out.)

Phrase 1 Do-si-do your partner.

Phrase 2 **John (rest)** **Ka-na-ka-na-ka** **tu lia** **e!**
 Stomp Pat rhythm on legs Clap Clap High five your partner

Phrase 3 As in phrase 1

Phrase 4 As in phrase 2

Phrase 5 **Tu lia e** **OH** **tu lia e!**
 Clap Clap High five Hands up while sliding to the R Clap Clap High five with new partner
 until you are facing a new partner.

Phrase 6 As in phrase 2

The Heart Statement

The heart of *John Kanaka* is in the carefully crafted phrases of the call-response form that draw us into conversation with each other and with musicians from another time.

Introducing the Piece

Slideshow – whaling photos (*Come Sail Away*)

Students will perform a movement activity using the recording ***Clog Branle***:

Directions: Form a single large circle.

Walk CCW 8 beats. Pivot.

Walk CW 8 beats. Face center.

Walk In 4 beats.

Listen as solo leader improvises a 4-beat rhythm (body percussion/free movement)

Walk Out 4 beats

Repeat the solo rhythm.

Next person becomes the new leader.

Create a phrase chart: 4 8-beat phrases (a a b b')

Post Vocabulary: form phrase call/response solo/chorus

Skill Outcome: Students will sing solo phrases with accurate pitch, rhythm and style.

A. Strategies

1. ***Clog Branle*** - circle game. Students improvise 4-beat solos using body percussion and class responds.
2. ***Old Blue*** – Call response song. Teacher leads with solo (call), class responds refrain. Use “microphone” to signal random small groups and random soloists on refrain. Ask for volunteers to sing the teacher’s part.
3. ***Yo Ho I Pull the Anchor*** – passing game. Solo on *I am the Captain now!*
4. Work in small groups to sing ***John Kanaka*** solo verses (also trios, duets and solos).
5. Teacher sings the solo (call). Students sing the response. Random small groups, duets, individual singing (microphone), pair volunteers with reluctant singers.
6. Sing familiar call-response songs (***Old John the Rabbit, Jane Jane, Old House, Oh, Won’t You Sit Down, Lord***). Use random soloists, duets, trios, small groups. Encourage volunteer soloists to sing the call.
7. Pass-the-Phrase game with variety of familiar songs. Allow reluctant singers to choose a partner.
8. Students will brainstorm qualities of a successful shanty man and help develop the success criteria for this outcome.
9. Use student models to evaluate success criteria as a large group. Repeat with partners and individually.

B. Assessment

1. Teacher observation using 4-point rubric/success criteria
 - 4 - Student sings entire phrase with correct pitch, rhythm and style
 - 3 - Student sings the entire phrase; pitch, rhythm, style are mostly correct
 - 2 - Student sings the entire phrase; pitch, rhythm, style are mostly incorrect
 - 1 - Student attempts to sing but doesn't complete the phrase
 - 0 - No evidence
2. Student self-evaluation/small group feedback using similar rubric

Knowledge Outcome: Students will analyze the phrase structure in a variety of songs.

A. Strategies

1. Create phrase maps for songs and dances performed in class (teacher directed, large group, small group, and individual). Help students to focus on phrase length, melody, and rhythm by performing phrases on neutral syllables.
2. Listen to a variety of songs. Identify the number of phrases. Identify whether the phrases are the same, different or similar. Utilize non-verb signals (i.e. thumb up, down or sideways), verbal responses and written responses.
3. Perform movement activities and simple folk dances (***Clog Branle, John Kanaka***, etc.) that reflect the phrase structure of the music.
4. Improvise question and answer phrases on drums, body percussion, or Orff instruments. Discuss phrase structure and provide feedback to partner.
5. Ask students to choreograph a movement to a folk tune that they've learned entirely on neutral syllables. (Use the ***Music for Children*** volumes by Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman). Their choreography should demonstrate the changing phrases and whether or not they are the same, different or similar. Work in groups of 2 or 3. Perform for each other, and then reveal the text.

B. Assessment

1. Teacher observation of large group and small group work (singing, movement, written maps)
2. Students will independently draw a phrase map/chart for an unknown piece that shows the number of phrases, their relative length and whether they are the same, similar or different.

Affective Outcome: Students will consider the way music allows us to converse with other musicians, even those in different times and places.

A. Strategies

1. Pair and share (*Old Blue* conversations)
2. Photos, maps
3. Book: ***You Wouldn't Want to Sail on a 19th Century Whaling Ship: Grisly Tasks You'd Rather Not Do*** by Peter Cook
4. Background information on whaling

5. Discussion of life at sea in the 1800's particularly the role of the Shanty Man and the crew.
6. Listen to recorded examples of musical conversation: military cadence, work songs, spirituals, Monteverdi, Bach, Handel, and Beethoven.
7. Ask students to find similar examples.
8. Performing a variety of call-response songs:
 - Old Blue**
 - Oh, Won't You Sit Down, Lord?**
 - Yo Ho, I Pull the Anchor**
 - Jane, Jane**
 - Grey Goose**
9. Performing call response style with body percussion (**Clog Branle**)
10. Drumming, Orff instruments – Question-Answer improvisations
11. Discussion of what makes a good conversation – listening, responding not just echoing, responses that vary as opposed to remaining the same.
12. Students will share examples they find of call-response songs.
13. Show brief video: The Lost Quays
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVjfnQywy7M>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQa9bcCdGXs>
 Students do round robin: "I noticed in the video that _____. Share out.
Written response: Who did you see communicating/conversing?"
14. Fantasy dinner party activity.

B. Assessment

1. Observation of student participation in large and small group discussions and performances.
2. Written and oral evidence students can correctly identify the use of "conversations" by composers across a variety of genres (i.e. short answers quiz, T/F listening quiz, raising your hand when you hear the conversation, identifying the specific instruments or voices involved)
3. Review students' written and oral reflections on the connections they share with their classmates and with the original performers of **John Kanaka** and other folk songs.
4. Fantasy dinner party activity – sharing with partner, turn in written responses

Music Selection

American folk songs are sung in elementary music classrooms every day. Most teachers agree they are the foundation of our repertoire, but there are a million American folk tunes to choose from. Of the thousands of work songs and hundreds of sea shanties, why choose **John Kanaka**?

As a starting point, folk tunes earn their place in the repertoire because they have survived. The winnowing of this enormous library of songs that has taken place over hundreds of years usually separates a lot of the wheat from the chaff. We rely on the

judgement of long dead singers who chose which songs to share with the next generation, as well as the wisdom of historians and publishers who collected the songs and recorded or notated them.

Still, in the end it remains the teacher's duty to examine each song to determine if it's worthy of our limited instructional time. It's easy to get distracted by a compelling story or a connection to history, but the song must have enough innate musical value to stand on its own. **John Kanaka** has earned its place in our classrooms because it is musically sound. The form, melody, and rhythm are carefully crafted, and it contains enough surprises to make it unique. The fact that it also ticks the boxes for good pedagogy and strong historical connections is the frosting on the cake.

Sources

Books

Sailors, Whalers, Fantastic Sea Voyages

Valerie Petrillo
Chicago Review Press, 2003

Shanties from the Seven Seas (Maritime)

Stan Hugill
Mystic Seaport Museum, 1994

You Wouldn't Want to Sail on a 19th Century Whaling Ship

Peter Cook
Book House, 2019

What Do You Do With a Drunken Sailor? Unexpurgated Sea Chanties

Douglas Morgan
Swordsmith Pub; First American Edition edition (May 1, 2002)

Recordings

Beatus Vir

Claudio Monteverdi
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XaTbzwerpnM>

Brandenburg Concerto #2 in F, Movement 1: Allegro

JS Bach
Academy of St. Martin in the Fields
Sir Neville Mariner, conductor
Album: *The Brandenburg Concertos - The Orchestra Suites*
Phillips, 2002

Clog Branle

16th century French circle dance/Arranged by Shenanigans
Album: *Phoenix Special*
Shenanigans Music, 1999

Come Sail Away Dennis DeYoung
Styx: *The Great Illusion*
A & M, 1977

I'll Take You There

Al Bell
The Staple Singers: ***Respect Yourself***
Stax Records, 1972
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qsl4A9hZETo>

Oh Lord I Want to Go Home

US Army Special Forces
Album: *Work Hard/Stay Hard: Exercise to the Marching Cadences*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dq7a51u7kvc>

Symphony #5, Movement 1: *Allegro con brio*

Ludwig van Beethoven
2012 Promenade Concert – Royal Albert Hall
Daniel Barenboim conducting the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jv2WJMVPQi8&t=25s>

Hallelujah Chorus from Messiah

George Frideric Handel
Royal Choral Society and Royal Symphony Orchestra
Live at Royal Albert Hall, Good Friday, 2012
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUZEtVbJT5c>

John Kanaka Cup Passing Game – The Lost Quays

Filed live at the Accoustic Pub Crawl Tour 2017, Bremen, Germany
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQa9bcCdGXs>

Music

Ah Poor Bird English Round
www.music-for-music-teachers.com

Grey Goose Traditional American Folk Song
From The American Folk Song Collection at Holy Names University

Jane, Jane ***The Book of Call and Response***
John Feierabend
GIA Publications, 2003

John Kanaka ***Shanties and Sailors' Songs*** by Stan Hugel
London: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1969
From The American Folk Song Collection at Holy Names University

Oh, Won't You Sit Down

African American Spiritual
Spotlight on Music Grade 4
Macmillan-McGraw Hill

Old Blue

Traditional Ballad (Melody from Tom Sletto)

Old John the Rabbit

The Book of Call and Response
John Feierabend
GIA Publications, 2003

Yo Ho, I Pull the Anchor

**One, Two, Three, Echo Me!: Ready to Use Songs, Games, and Activities
to Help Children Sing in Tune**
Loretta Mitchell
Prentice Hall Direct 1990

John Kanaka

Informant/Performer:
Unknown seaman in Barbados, West Indies

Source:
Stan Hugill
Shanties and Sailor's Songs
London: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1969

The musical score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of six systems of music. Each system has a solo line and a group line. The lyrics are as follows:

Solo
I heard, I heard the Old Man say,
Group
John Ka - na - ka - na - ka tu - lai - e!
Solo
To - day to - day is a ho - li - day.
Group
John Ka na - ka - na - ka tu - lai - e!
Tu - lai e - oh! tu - lai - e!
John Ka - na - ka - na - ka tu - lai - e!

2. We'll work tomorrow, but no work today,
John Kanaka-naka, tulai-e!
Today, today is a holiday,
John Kanaka-naka, tulai-e!
Tulai-e, oh! tulai-e!
John Kanaka-naka, tulai-e!

3. We're bound away for Frisco Bay...
We're bound away at the break o' day...

4. A Yankee ship with a Yankee crew...
Oh we're the buckos for to push her through...

5. A Yankee ship with a Yankee mate...
If you stop to walk he'll change your gait...

6. Oh, haul away, oh, haul away!...
Oh, haul away, an' make your pay!...

Background Information

This halyard song is the only known representative of a sizeable group of Anglicized Polynesian work-songs popular at one time among seamen in the various Pacific Islands trades. Dana, in his *Two Years Before the Mast*, refers to such songs and the singing of them by Mahana, an Hawaiian shantyman in the hide carriers of the Pacific Slope of America in the 1830s.

The one given here appears to have Samoan connections. However, it was not limited to ships in the Pacific Island trades, this one being very popular in most American sailing ships of the mid-nineteenth century.

John Kanaka is one of the few representatives of the three-line solo and three-line refrain shanties.

The "oh" in the third solo, when sung by a good shantyman, was always rendered with a hitch (a sort of wild yelp).

CMP Demo Lesson Background Information Sheet

This sheet offers participants a “peek behind the curtain” to the things that were considered in the creation of this CMP plan. Remember that the beauty of the model is that it can be adapted by *all* teachers to meet our own unique circumstances! NO EXCUSES...ROCK THE STAR!

ABOUT THE STUDENTS	
Age(s)/grade(s) of the students the plan is intended for?	Grade 5 (Appropriate grades 3-6)
Describe the student population of the group (how long have you known them, are they mature/immature, how well do they know how to rehearse, do you have special needs/students with aides in the group, are they motivated/unmotivated, etc.)	<p>Monroe Elementary has 565 students in grades K-5. The mobility rate is high. In a typical 5th grade class I might have 5 or 6 kids who have been enrolled since kindergarten. Our families are mostly working poor and 100% of them qualify for free lunches. Many of my students are immigrants or refugees. They speak 33 different languages. There is no majority racial group.</p> <p>We serve special needs students in all categories and with the exception of a small class of students with severe and profound disabilities, all SPED students are integrated into regular classes. Class sizes are moderate: 20-28 per class. Our test scores are near the bottom both district-wide and state-wide.</p> <p>Motivation is a moving target. Some days are better than others. Some students are more motivated than others. Some of our students are traumatized and suffer from anxiety and depression. Some are happy, healthy and love to learn.</p> <p>Most parents want the best for their children but they have extremely full plates. Some of my students live in happy, loving homes, some live in chaos. Some are struggling to make the transition from the 3rd world to American culture; others are savvier about the ways</p>

	<p>of the world than I was at 30. They are also beautiful and clever and sometimes amazing.</p> <p>I spent most of my 43 year teaching career at Monroe. I watched it change from a school with a broad socio-economic range to a school where the middle class has disappeared and the deck is stacked against those who remain.</p>
How frequently do you see this group each week?	I see my students once every 4 days for 45 minutes. There are 4 sections of 5 th grade that will combine for the performance. There is no rehearsal time. We put it together the night of the concert. I figure parents and administrators might as well see how the sausage is made. 😊
Readiness of the students for this piece (will it be a challenge for them, is it on their current level, or is it on the easier side)?	This will be a challenge. My students will need lots of support and encouragement. I'll need to break the process down into "digestible bites" so they don't get discouraged. (Because so many of my students have to deal with constant academic failure, they often don't express discouragement in very healthy ways.) On the upside, music offers a chance to excel in ways that are different from the regular classroom. Sometimes students with little or no ability to read and write have beautiful singing voices or a gift for dance.
What percentage of students in this group study privately?	None. About 25% participate in band or orchestra and receive a group lesson once a week.
PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS	
Time of year/concert cycle intended for?	Our concert is in April, though I often teach this piece even if it is not intended for performance.
How many other pieces/how many more minutes of music will this group be	They will perform a total of 5 songs (about 15-20 minutes). Our after-school, non-

performing on the concert with this piece?	select chorus will also perform so the entire concert is maybe 40 minutes.
Are there any unique time constraints for this concert cycle (testing, holidays, breaks, etc)?	State testing is always in April. Generally my teaching schedule is altered but not cancelled for testing. There are often students missing because they are being given additional time to complete their testing. I integrate the "program songs" into my regular curriculum so we shouldn't be scrambling to learn stuff for the concert.....but sometimes we are.
Describe your physical space and any constraints you might have.	My classroom is approximately 1000 sq ft. It has hardwood floors. There are chairs, a piano, and lots of Orff instruments so it's tight. Movement is a challenge but we are getting faster at stacking chairs and/or adapting to limited space. Our stage area for performances is only about 300 sq ft so we're used to "making it work."
TEACHER THOUGHTS	
Have you done this piece before? Why did you choose to do it again/do it for the first time?	I've taught this piece many times. It's a classic of the repertoire and a student favorite.
How did you hear about this piece? Where did you first find about about it?	I first learned this song at an Orff workshop, and it appears in most textbook series and elementary curricula. I used a different version for many years but found this one during my Kodaly studies and like it better.
What were your priorities in choosing to do THIS piece for your CMP plan for the year?	The expectation for the elementary demo is that the participants will experience a large number of strategies. General music teachers are usually masters of strategy because we need a BIG bag of tricks to reach the wide variety of abilities and learning styles (not to mention attention spans) you find in an elementary classroom. I felt sure a classic folk song like John Kanaka that I had taught a thousand times would deliver the goods.

However, to avoid a sense of “just going through the motions,” I decided to approach it like a brand new piece. I had never written a formal CMP plan on **John Kanaka** so I started by committing to doing a truly thorough analysis. I really dug deep and tried to let the music speak to me BEFORE I considered the text, or the admittedly fascinating background history, or even how I would teach the piece.

By taking that approach, the music led me to 3 outcomes that I had never associated with this piece before; outcomes that I think are richer, more interesting, and more organic to this song. They in turn led me to create new strategies and grapple with new forms of assessment.

CMP is sort of magical in that respect. It allows you to approach lesson planning through 5 different doors. By starting this plan with the point of the model where I confess I often feel less than competent (analysis), I was granted a new perspective on an old friend.