



Muse Machine
Lesson Plan Inspired by Summer Institute 2022

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Inspiration: Singing opera requires a modern singer to find ways to connect emotionally to lyrics written in a different language, by someone who lived long ago or who are not like them in other ways. In choir class, I want to find ways for my students to connect to a spiritual on an appropriate personal level.		
Title: Finding An Emotional Connection to Choral Repertoire		
Subject Area & Grade Level: HS Mixed Ensemble (grades 9-12 men and women, approx. 48 singers)		

I. OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Summary: In this lesson, students will explore ways to make personal connections to the text of *My Song in the Night* and work towards a more emotional performance. They will do this through reflective activities on their own experiences, as well as listening to recordings of the ensemble's performance.

Standards: Ohio Music - HS III Intermediate:

- 1CE - Interpret music symbols and terms expressively while performing a varied repertoire of music.
- 1PR - Sing or play, alone and/or in ensembles, demonstrating accurate intonation and rhythm, fundamental skills, advanced technique and a high degree of musicality
- 4PR - Perform an appropriate part in an ensemble demonstrating well developed ensemble skills.
- 1RE - Apply assessment practices to demonstrate their learning and understanding of fundamental music concepts and music literacy.
- 2RE - Discuss how people differ in their responses to the aesthetic qualities of performance including their personal responses.
- 3RE - Assess how elements of music are used in a work to create images or evoke emotions.
- 5RE - Evaluate how musical forms are influenced by history.
- 6RE - Compare and contrast a musical work with another work of art (e.g., dance, drama or visual art) from the same culture on the basis of cultural influences.

Objectives/Outcomes: As students perform *My Song in the Night*, they will be able to make a personal emotional connection to the piece based on their life experiences.

Teaching Approach(es): Full Ensemble Rehearsal, Guided Group Discussion, Individual Activity, Exit Slip and Reflection

Assessment Tool(s): Audio recordings of *My Song in the Night*, Mad Lib worksheets (if students wish to share), exit slips on Google Classroom

II. LESSON PREPARATION

Teacher Needs

- ❖ **Teacher Context & Research:** Source a copy of *My Song in the Night* arr. by Mack Wilberg.
- ❖ **Helpful Hints:** Make sure students are comfortable with the main melody of this piece prior to introducing this lesson, so they get the most out of the experience!

Student Needs

- ❖ **Prior Knowledge:** Students will have learned the melody of *My Song in the Night* through m. 25 (men will have learned it, even though it is SA only). Students also will have a basic fundamental understanding of singing in a choral setting (tone, dynamics, breath support, etc.).
- ❖ **Student Voice:** Students will be able to choose their script for the Mad Lib and who they share their Mad Libs with in small groups.
- ❖ **Vocabulary:** None specific to this lesson that would not be used in daily rehearsals.

III. EVIDENCE OF OUTCOMES

Students will be able to connect to the piece on a more emotional level as demonstrated by comparing recordings of the group singing the first 25 bars before and after our class activity, as well as through personal reflection in an exit ticket after the activity.

IV. ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Finding a personal connection will enhance a musical performance and make it more enjoyable for audience members; No matter what the meaning of a lyric may be, there is always a way to make a personal connection when performing it.

V. LEARNING PLAN

Teaching Inquiry Question: How can lyrical analysis help students connect emotionally for a more fulfilling performance and musical experience?

Essential Question: Why is it important to infuse our musical performances with strong emotional connections?

Resources/Materials:

- Cell phone or iPad with Voice Memo app
- YouTube clip of Joaquina Kalukango from Tony Awards performance of *Paradise Square* - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLVk4OdyGFg&ab_channel=DeeDee
- Sheet music for *My Song in the Night*, arr. Mack Wilberg for SATB choir
- [Mad Libs worksheet](#) (see below)
- Student Chromebooks
- Access to Google Classroom
- [Exit slip](#) on Google Docs for students to complete digitally

Hook: Students will review the first 25 measures of *My Song in the Night* and will be recorded as they sing via voice memo for future reference.

Main Lesson Narrative/Sequence:

SETUP: Students will watch the clip from *Paradise Square* and be asked to watch for what made the performance enjoyable and how it made them feel as an audience member. Through sharing with the class, students will identify her emotional connection with the piece. I'll ask students if it mattered that they didn't have any background context for the performance of the piece, and we'll discuss their feedback and thoughts from the clip.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY: We'll sing through the first verse of *My Song in the Night* again as an ensemble and review some of the things that musically make this piece so special. I'll reference the video again and the power of personal connection to any piece. I will pass out the worksheets to the students, instructing them to keep it on the blank side, and have them silently think of a time that they were struggling and low, and something or someone that pulled them out and helped them to move forward. Students will be instructed to either write or sketch out that experience on their paper - not to be collected, just for them to think through. Students will have approximately 5 minutes (depending on lesson time) to complete.

GROUP RE-WRITE: Coming back together, we'll emphasize the need to emotionally connect to a performance piece to make it more enjoyable for those listening - referencing back to our YouTube clip. Students will be instructed to flip their papers and complete the Mad Lib for verse 1, changing the song to fit themselves more. Three to five minutes will be allotted for this activity, and at the end students will have the opportunity to share their mad libs with each other in small groups. If time permits, we may even sing through it once as a group with them all singing their version simultaneously (ah, musical chaos!).

CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION: We will discuss how important it is to find a way to relate to any musical piece and start tying in their personal journeys to the text of *My Song in the Night*. At the conclusion, we will sing through the first 25 measures again, recording the piece as a voice memo. Students will listen to and compare the two recordings in a digital exit slip on Google Classroom that gives them the chance to give feedback on how adding a stronger emotional connection changes the performance, and why it is important for us as musicians to bring that element to the music.

Demonstration of Learning: Pre- and post-lesson audio recordings of *My Song in the Night*, completed Mad Lib worksheet, exit slip reflections

Final Review: I will know what they have taken away from the lesson and discussion from the audio recordings and from the exit slips that the students will submit.

VI. LESSON REFLECTION

Students will complete an exit slip to reflect on the concepts shared in this lesson. The audio recordings of *My Song in the Night* will be posted on Google Classroom and available for them to listen to and reflect upon further.

ARTIFACTS OF LEARNING

[My Song in the Night pre-lesson recording](#)

[My Song in the Night post-lesson recording](#)

[Sample student Mad Libs](#)

Sample student reflections ([one](#), [two](#), [three](#))

Mad-Lib Time

Fill in the blanks below - the original word is in italics below so you keep the same beat in the song!

Oh _____, My _____, My Song in the Night,
Jesus Savior

Come to _____ with thy _____, _____,
us tender love

my _____.
soul's delight

Unto _____ Oh _____ in _____ I go
Thee Lord affliction

My _____ by Day and My Song in the Night.
Comfort

EXIT SLIP

1. When comparing the two audio recordings from our performance in class today, what differences did you hear between the first and second recordings? Think about our discussion from class - draw on the emotional performance, not just the technical aspects (tone quality, dynamics, volume).

2. Which performance was easier for you to sing - the first or second recording? Which of the two did you prefer to listen to more?

3. Why is it imperative for a singer to bring an emotional connection to their performances?