

5 Hepa hepa nay nay

RESOURCES ▶ CD1 track 5 ▶ Warm ups: Nos. 2, 7, 8, 16c

Information

This is a simple blessing, one of many native American tribal songs. Such pieces are popular with the Green, the Peace, and the Circle movements because of their directness and simplicity which show a genuine reverence for the earth and nature. It is a great song for bringing a group together and sharing. Vocally the narrow range makes it good as a warm up, and it's particularly good for developing leadership or 'conducting' skills.

Starting

- In a circle, sit cross-legged or kneel. When singing, keep backs straight.
- Tap knees with hands and establish a good strong crotchet pulse.
- Play 'follow my leader': choose someone to lead who then changes the pulse gradually, faster *and* slower.

Teaching and rehearsing

- Choose a comfortable pitch, and teach the first section by rote, call and response style—it's the same bar sung four times.
- Break the second section into smaller units if required.
- Aim for good, strong, unified and confident sound, then sing it continuously, speeding up each time. Singers just watch and follow a leader; no verbal communication is necessary.
- To open up and stretch the voices, raise the pitch a few times.

Ideas

- Divide into groups of four. Each group takes it in turn to sing the first section, and everyone joins in the second section and the claps.
- This can be developed for encouraging solos. Each person in the small groups sings one phrase each, then everyone joins in the second section as before. This is a very useful way of hearing every voice, having built some confidence in small groups.
- It is important that no one is forced to sing, but equally they should be discouraged from opting out. If anyone is reluctant, or is inaccurate with pitch or rhythm, simply keep the thing flowing, count the silence then move on without a break. Repeating the exercise often produces an improvement very rapidly.


Listen out

- Some younger singers never get the words absolutely right, so check pronunciation occasionally, but don't labour the point. The important focus here is group singing with conviction.

Performing

- The aim of this song is to develop a cohesive group and confident sound. Use it to promote communication within the circle rather than 'outward' performance, although you might like to share it with others.

Trad. native American



He-pa he-pa nay_ nay, he-pa he-pa nay_ nay, he-pa he-pa nay_ nay, he-pa he-pa nay_ nay,



he-pa nay yan-na hen-nay jo - weh. (clap clap) He-pa nay yan-na hen-nay jo - weh. (clap clap)