The Community Choir Song Book

Easy to sing songs and rounds for Community Choirs

Arranged and Edited by Duncan Brown
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## Notes on the songs

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Upbeat Warm-up Rounds

1. Baba Mama

2. Tue Tue

3. Shalom Chaverin

3. Shalom Chaverin

3. Shalom Chaverin, Shalom, Shalom, Till

3. Shalom Chaverin, Shalom, Shalom, Till
4. To The Greenwood

Come follow follow follow follow follow follow follow follow me

Whither shall I follow follow follow Whither shall I follow follow thee?

To the greenwood To the greenwood To the greenwood greenwood tree.

5. This Old Freedom Train

This old freedom train is a long time comin', Ain't no

body can afford it so you'd better get aboard it Gimme that

Freedom Gimme that Freedom Gimme that

Freedom Freedom Freedom chk-a-chk chk-a-chk chk-a-chk chk-a-chk chk-a-chk
6. Ah Poor Bird

Ah poor Bird, Why art thou,
Take your flight,
As you fly,

Ly - ing in the sha - dows of this dark hour?
Far a - bove the so - th of this dark night.
Can you see the dawn of to - mo - rrow's sky?

7. Oh How Lovely Is The Evening

Oh how love - ly is the even - ing is the even - ing

When the bellls are swee - tly sing - ing swee - tly sing - ing

Ding, Dong Ding, Dong Ding
8. Tongo

Polynesian Traditional

9. Abiyoyo Abeyo

Aboriginal Song
10. Senwa Dedende

Cheerfully

1. Senwa de-den-de Senwa Senwa de-den-de Senwa

2. Senwa de-den-de Senwa Senwa de-den-de Senwa

3. Senwa de-den-de Senwa Senwa de-den-de Senwa

Slowly

1. Senwa de-den-de Senwa de-den-de Senwa de-den-de Senwa

2. Senwa de-den-de Senwa de-den-de Senwa de-den-de Senwa

3. Senwa de-den-de Senwa de-den-de Senwa
11. Gaudeamus
We rejoice today

Briskly

Gau-de-a-mus, Gau-de-a-mus, Gau-de-a-mus, Ho-di-e,

Gau-de-a-mus, Gau-de-a-mus, Ho-di-e

Gau-de-a-mus

Gau-de-a-mus Ho-di-e

Gau-de-a-mus Gau-de-a-mus

Gau-de-a-mus Ho-di-e, Ho-di-e
12. John Kanaka

2. We'll work tomorrow, but no work today,
For today, today is a holiday,

3. We're outward bound for 'Frisco Bay,
We're outward bound at the break of day.

4. We're bound away around Cape Horn,
Where you wish to God you'd not been born!

5. And when we get to 'Frisco Bay,
We'll pay off ship and draw our pay

6. O haul, oh haul, oh haul away,
O haul away, an' make yer pay!

Tu-lai-ay, Oh! Tu-lai-ay!
John Kanaka-naka tu-lai-ay!
2. On the road I found a saddle,
I found a saddle and an empty poke.

Chorus

3. I found a saddle and an empty poke,
But where the hell was the bleedin’ moke.

Chorus

4. The moke is gone and I’ll go too,
I’ll sail away to Backaloo.

Chorus

5. Oh, hoist ’er up and away we’ll go,
Hoist ’er up from down below.

Chorus

6. Oh, give ’er sheet and let ’er go,
We’re outward bound to Backalow.
2. Oh Shenandoah,
I love your daughter,
Away, you rolling river.
For her I'd cross
Your roaming waters,
Away, I'm bound away
Across the wide Missouri.

3. 'Tis seven years
since last I've seen you,
Away, you rolling river.
'Tis seven years
since last I've seen you,
Away, we're bound away
Across the wide Missouri.

4. Oh Shenandoah,
I long to hear you,
Away, you rolling river.
Oh Shenandoah,
I long to hear you,
Away, we're bound away
Across the wide Missouri.
Fast

1. Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Can you hear the music playing in the village square
   Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Come where all our friends will find us With the dancers there.

2. Dawn will find us laughing in the sunlight
   Dawn will find us laughing in the sunlight.

3. there'll be people there from ev - en - na - tion
   in the village square.

4. Dancing in the city square —
   with the dancers there.

1. Clap

2. Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na

3. Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na

10 Israel
1. Tse-na Tse-na Can you hear the music playing? join the celebration!

2. there'll be people there from every nation square in the village square with the dancers there.

3. Dancing in the city

Clap

Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Can you hear the music playing?

Clap

Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Can you hear the music playing?

Clap

Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Tse-na Can you hear the music playing?
16. Over My Head

Solo or small group

F

O-ver my head
In the air

F/C

C7

I see trouble in the air.
I hear music in the air
I hear singing in the air

Bb

C7

There must be joy somewhere
17. Pachelbel's Canon

Slowly

A - le - lu - ya A - le - lu - ya

softly

A - le - lu - ya A - le - lu - ya

A - le - lu - ya A - le - lu - ya A - le - lu - ya

louder

A - le - lu - ya A - le - lu - ya

A - le - lu - ya A - le - lu - ya

louder

A - le - lu - ya A - le - lu - ya

A - le - lu - ya A - le - lu - ya A - le - lu - ya

loud

A - le - lu - ya A - le - lu - ya
18. Steal Away

S.  
Steal away Steal away Steal away To Jesus Steal away Steal away home I

A.  

Steal away Steal away Steal away To Jesus Steal away Steal away home I

B.  

Steal away Steal away Steal away To Jesus Steal away Steal away home I

7

S.  
ain't got long to stay here Steal away Steal away Steal away To Jesus

A.  

ain't got long to stay here Steal away Steal away Steal away To Jesus

B.  

ain't got long to stay here Oh Steal away Steal away Steal away To Jesus

13

S.  
Steal away Steal away home I ain't got long to stay here

A.  

Steal away Steal away home I ain't got long to stay here

B.  

Steal away Steal away home I ain't got long to stay here
He calls me by the thunder
Poor sinner stands a-trembling,

My Lord he calls me,
Green trees a-bending

trumpet sounds within my soul, I ain't got long to stay here

Steal a-way Steal a-way home I ain't got long to stay here
19. Cape Cod Shanty

**Verse 1 & 4 - Men**

With spirit

**Verses 2 & 3 - Ladies**

1. Cape Cod boys they have no sleds Heave a-

2. Cape Cod men they have no sails

3. Cape Cod boys they have no combs,

4. Cape Cod wives they have no combs

- They slide down hill on cod-fish heads

- They sail their boats with cod-fish tails

- They comb their hair with cod-fish bones, We are

- They pin their gowns with cod-fish pins

- We are bound for Australia

- We are bound for Australia

- We are bound for Australia

- We are bound for Australia

- We are bound for Australia

- We are bound for Australia
20. Freedom is Coming

Gospel Traditional
1. Freedom is coming. Oh yes I know.

A. Freedom is coming. Oh yes I know.

B. Freedom is coming. Oh yes I know.

2. Freedom is coming. Oh yes I know.

A. Freedom is coming. Oh yes I know.

B. Freedom is coming. Oh yes I know.

21 Finish here 2nd time around.

S. Freedom is coming. Oh yes I know.

A. Freedom is coming. Oh yes I know.

B. Freedom is coming. Oh yes I know.

24 Slow

S. Freedom

A. Freedom

B. Freedom

Go Back to Letter A
21. The Lion Sleeps Tonight

In time

\textbf{S.} \\
\textbf{A.} \\
\textbf{B.} \\

\textbf{All sing}

\textbf{C.} \\

In the jungle the mighty jungle, the Lion sleeps tonight.

Near the village the peaceful village,

Hush, my darling, don't fear my darling.

Wim-a-weigh, a Wim-a-weigh,

Wim-a-weigh Aah

He he he a

He he he a

Wee up aah ah Wim-a-weigh Aah ah Wim-a-weigh Aah Ah Wim-a-weigh Aah

Wee up aah ah Wim-a-weigh Aah ah Wim-a-weigh Aah Ah Wim-a-weigh Aah

Wee up aah ah Wim-a-weigh Aah ah Wim-a-weigh Aah Ah Wim-a-weigh Aah
brother, not my sister but it's me O Lord, standing in need of prayer. It's

me it's me O Lord, standing in need of prayer. It's

me I'm a standing it's me I'm a standing. Standing in need of prayer. It's

me I'm a standing It's me I'm a standing. It's me. Standing in need of prayer. It's

Not my brother, not my sister

It's me I'm a standing it's me I'm a standing. Standing in need of prayer. It's

Standing Lord It's me I'm a standing. It's me I'm a standing. I'm
23. Siyahamba
We Are Marching

Briskly

S. 1
Siyahamba ka khan yen-i kwenkos Si ya
We are marching in the light of God, We are

A. 4
Siyahamba ka khan yen-i kwenkos Si ya
We are marching in the light of God, We are

B. 7
Siyahamba ka khan yen-i kwenkos Si ya
We are marching in the light of God, We are

1st time Zulu, 2nd English, repeat both softly, last verse Zulu loud

South African Zulu
Oh Ee Si - ya ham - ba ku khan yen - i kwen kos,
We are mar - ching in the light of God,

ham - ba ham - ba si ya ham - ba
mar - ching, mar - ching we are mar - ching mar - ching
We are mar - ching in the light of God,

si - ya - ham - ba
We are mar - ching

Kwen kos si - ya ham - ba ham - ba si ya
of God We are mar - ching, mar - ching we are

Oh Ee Si - ya ham - ba ku khan yen - i kwen kos,
We are mar - ching in the light of God,

ham - ba hum - ba Si - ya ham - ba ku khan yen - i kwen kos,
mar - ching mar - ching We are mar - ching in the light of God
I can-not get to my love if I wad dee The water of Tyne runs be tween him and me And here I must stand with a tear in my e'e Both sigh-ing and cry-ing my sweet-heart to see Aah - - - - To fer-ry me o-ver the Tyne to my ho-ney boat-man and thee Tyne to my ho-ney And I will re-mem-ber the boat-man and thee
bring me a boat-man I'll give a ny mon-ey And you for your trou-ble re-war-ded shall be To fer-ry me o-ver the

Tyne to my ho-ney And scull him a-cross that rough ri-ver to me I can-not get to my love

if I wad dee The wa-ter of Tyne runs be tween him and me And here I must stand with a tear in my e'e Both

sigh-ing and cry-ing my sweet-heart to see

Both sigh-ing and cry-ing my sweet-heart to see
25. Djore Dos

Bulgarian Traditional

A.

O Djore O Djore O Djore O Djore

B.

O Djore O Djore O Djore O Djore

S.

Djore Dos is sitting there. Are you crazy Djore?

A.

Eh

B.

Eh

S.

Sitting there outside the door. Are you crazy Djore?

A.

Eh

B.

Eh

S.

Sitting there outside the door. Eh

A.

Eh

B.

Eh
Oh Knit-ting there is Djore, Oh

Djore knits a co-loured sock, Knit-ting there is Djore, Djore knits a co-loured sock,

Oh Knit-ting there is Djore, Oh

Are you crazy Djore? O Djore O Djore O Djore O Djore Eh

Are you crazy Djore? O Djore O Djore O Djore O Djore Eh

Are you crazy Djore?

Who's the sock for, Djore Dos?

Who's the sock for Djore? Eh

Who's the sock for Djore? Eh

Who's the sock for Djore? Who's the sock for, Djore Dos?

Are you crazy Djore? Eh

Are you crazy Djore? O Djore O Djore O Djore O Djore Ya!

Are you crazy Djore?

Are you crazy Djore? O Djore O Djore O Djore O Djore Ya!
26. A Great Big Sea
Newfoundland Folk Song

Bouncy Tempo

S. G D7 G D7 G D7

A. D7 G D7 G D7

B. D7 G D7 G D7

A great big sea hove in Long beach Right

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

Doo doo doo doo-be doo-be Doo doo doo -

A great big sea hove in Long beach Right

To me
Right folders diddle diddle diddle

doo be - doo be -
doo be -

To me
Slowly

\[ q = 66 \]

Shosholoza

S. Work ing in the sun

A. Work ing in the sun

B. Oom Oom

work ing hard, work ing til day is done

S. Shosholoza

A. Shosholoza

B. Oom Oom

Shosholoza Oom Oom

Shosholoza

work ing hard, work ing til day is done

S. Shosholoza

A. Shosholoza

B. Oom Oom

work ing hard, work ing til day is done

S. Shosholoza

A. Shosholoza

B. Oom Oom

Work ing in the rain work ing hard, til there sun ag ain

S. Shosholoza

A. Shosholoza

B. Oom Oom

Shosholoza

Work ing in the rain work ing hard, til there sun ag ain

S. Shosholoza

A. Shosholoza

B. Oom Oom

Shosholoza

10

\[ q = 110 \]

Upbeat

Finger Snaps

S. Sho sho lo za

A. Sho sho lo za

B. Sho sho lo za

Finger Snaps

m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay
Sho-sho-lo-za

Working in the sun working hard, working til day is done

Working in the rain working hard, til there is sun again

Sho-sho-lo-za

Working in the sun working hard, working til day is done

Working in the rain working hard, til there is sun again

Sho-sho-lo-za
Sho-sho-lo-za  Work-ing in the sun  work-ing hard, work-ing til day_ is done

Sho-sho-lo-za  Work-ing in the sun  work-ing hard, work-ing til day_ is done

2nd Alto or Tenor  

Work-ing  In the sun  Work-ing all day  Work-ing til the day is done

m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay

Sho-sho-lo-za  Work-ing in the rain  work-ing hard, til there is sun a-gain

Sho-sho-lo-za  Work-ing in the rain  work-ing hard, til there is sun a-gain

m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay

Finger Snaps  

Sho-sho-lo-za  

m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay m ch m u-lay Sho-sho-lo-za
Notes on the Songs

Warm-up Rounds and Call-and-Response Songs

Rounds and call-and-response songs are an excellent way of developing vocal confidence, pitching, and getting people used to singing in small groups as preparation for singing in parts. Baba Mama and Tue Tue are introductory rounds. Ask the choir to sing them softly or loudly or ‘happily’, or ‘sadly’ or any adjective members of the choir might suggest to explore different vocal timbres.

Shalom Chaverin and This Old Freedom Train are good for improving diction.

O How Lovely Is The Evening has an interesting echo effect at the end of lines, requiring singers to change quickly from loud to soft.

To the Greenwood and Ah Poor Bird both have intervals in the melody line and are good for developing secure pitching.

Tongo and Abiyo Abeyo are good for establishing group confidence in singing separate parts.

Senwa Dedende and Gaudeamus are rounds that can be used in performance and you can experiment with different dynamics. Senwa Dedende is a good audience participation round.

Three Part Songs

John Kanaka, Pull Down Below and Shenandoah introduce three part singing in short phrases. Singing the tune and then breaking into harmony allows singers to pitch their parts. Allocate different verses to different groups. In Shenandoah the phrase ‘Across the wide (Missouri)’ is sung on a jazzy chord which requires a little preparation to give the singers the confidence that they are singing the correct notes.

The Israeli song Tsena Tsena is, strictly speaking, a round but introduces three part harmony in the last two sections (from bar 14). The last ‘Tsena’ suddenly starts softly and gets louder so that final ‘na!’ is as loud as possible.

Over My Head introduces a solo line sung in the gaps of the melody. In the past I have divided the biggest group (usually the sopranos) in two, allocating the solo part to one group and the melody to the rest or to an individual, if there is a strong solo singer. The solo also allows you and choir members to experiment with improvising new riffs.
Pachelbel’s Canon is an excellent introduction to a gradual change of dynamics, starting softly, becoming loud in the middle and then softening towards a very soft ending. Its slow speed and repeated long notes allow singers to think about the quality of their voice and the dynamic of the phrase.

Steal Away allows you to refine the dynamic changes introduced in Pachelbel’s Canon, shaping the dynamic rise and fall within phrases. In the first singing of the chorus, the men sing a basic harmony, but the falling bass line introduced in the second rendition (bar 9) adds a magical tension. The verse allows the men and altos to sing solo loudly with a suitably impressive tone. The pause after ‘in my soul’ allows the singers to readjust their voices to sing the next phrase more softly. Steal Away also introduces the usual music terms for loud and soft (forte and piano) which the group will eventually meet in published scores.

Cape Cod Shanty is a cheerful Newfoundland song. The glissandi (vocal slides) at ‘Go Heave’ are an effective choral technique which is fun to do as well.

Freedom is Coming, The Lion Sleeps Tonight and Standin’ In Need of a Prayer allow you to introduce the idea of different tempos in one song and in giving solo parts to the altos and the men, to strengthen their ability to hold a part securely. The Lion Sleeps, a South African folk song which most will know from the Lion King, is an easy song to begin encouraging the group to memorise.

Siyahamba is the first of the fully harmonised songs. An ebullient Zulu song, the rhythm is almost a dance rhythm and the diction should reflect this, with hard consonant sounds. The rhythmic ‘siya hamba’ in the altos and men in bar 10 and afterwards should be sung with an aspirant ‘h’ sound to make the phrase more emphatic.

The Water of Tyne is an atmospheric northern folk song. It introduces the idea of a wordless accompaniment over solo renditions of verses by the men and the altos.

Djore Dos is a children’s’ song from Bulgaria and its simple melody allows you to perform it at speed. It introduces the altos to the falling semitone lines that they will become used to in many scores (bar 55 and afterwards). Bulgarian folk music is sung with an open tone right at the front of the mouth, producing a harsh but exciting sound. The falling ‘Ya!’ is shouted.

A Great Big Sea is a bouncy Newfoundland song that needs little explanation, other than let the altos sing as out of tempo as they need in their solo from bar 24 onwards.

Shosholoza is a popular South African song which allows you to start divide the male voices into high and low. The Oom in the opening men’s part is a hard percussive sound. The tenor part at bar 26 can be sung by altos if necessary.

Finally, all of these songs can be sung without accompaniment, but in a few I have added chord symbols, which can be used to provide an accompaniment, playable on piano or guitar.