

Marko Skače: Slovenia's most popular folk song

Presented by Danielle Solan

Friday March 17, 2023, 4:15-5pm

Session Description:

We can awaken students' interest in other cultures by singing accessible and appealing song-games with movement and social interaction. In this session, participants will learn the song Marko Skače from Slovenia and develop strategies for unfolding this song game and incorporating instrumentation and dance.

Marko skače

Slovenian folk song



Verse 1:

Marko skače, Marko skače
po zelenoj trati,
aj aj, ajajaj, po zelenoj trati x2

Verse 2:

Pijte, jejte, pijte, jejte,
moj'ga brata konji
Aj aj, ajajaj, mój'ga brata konji x2

Verse 1:

Marco's jumping, Marco's jumping
on the green grass
Ay, ay, ay-ay-ay, on the green grass x2

Verse 2:

Drink and eat, drink and eat,
My brotherly horse
Ay, ay, ay-ay-ay, my brotherly horse

Origin: Slovenian folk song from Prekmurje area of Slovenia

Language: Slovene

Song meaning: This song tells the story of Marko, a youthful and energetic (jumping!) man who takes his horse and goes faraway looking for true love. When he finally finds a potential bride, her mother won't agree to let her daughter marry Marko because now he is too old.

Translation of all nine verses:

V1: Marko skače po zelenoj trati

V2: V rokaj nosi seden žuti zlati

V3: To de njemi za devojko dati

Marko is jumping on the green grass.

In his hand he carries seven gold coins...

Which he will give to the maiden!

V4: Pijte, jejte moj'ga brata konji

V5: Pa smo išli daleč po devojko

V6: Prek devetih pred desetih mostov

Drink and eat, my brotherly horse!

We've come far for the maiden...

Over nine, then ten bridges!

V7: Dajte nam jo naša draga mati

V8: Ne dam ti jo star si i bradati

V9: Naj jo jejo miši i podgane

Give her to me, dear mother!

No, I won't give her to you— you're old and bearded!

Let the mice and rats eat you then!

Historical Background: If online sources I found are correct, then Marko Skače was first published as a song text in the 1830's and that it was recorded on wax cylinders in 1889. Marko Skače was one of the first recordings of Slovenian folk music, and the wax rollers are kept in the Ethnographic Museum of Budapest. Marko Skače has been traditionally been performed in the context of a social event with couples and a large group dancing in a circle. Marko Skače is performed by Slovenian musicians in every style, including rock and hip hop.

YOUTUBE RESOURCES

Stage Performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5q3Uc8Jk3KQ>

Kitchen table with accordian: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lejzYvxx-k>

Pronunciation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9n2EJU5VliM>

Historic recordings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s94-VoUKnhI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CP6YxE5CUHQ>

LESSON OUTLINE

- Learn the song using guiding questions and mini-engagements
 - This song is about a happy man who loves to jump. Can you listen and find his name?
 - Marko skače means “Marko is jumping.” Can you jump when you hear this phrase?
 - There is a phrase in this song that is supposed to sound like a person laughing. Can you find it and pat your stomach to the rhythm? Can you clap to the rhythm?
- Briefly share the meaning and history of the song
- Learn a dance (circle formation)
 - A section actions:
 - Jump on Marko
 - Clap and walk inward on Ay yay yay, then clap and walk backward
 - B section actions:
 - Sing lai lai lai (singing the instrument part) faster, melody modulated up a fourth (IV)
 - Hold dance, go fast around in a circle
- Share Marko Skače dancing video
 - Sing lai lai lai (singing the instrument part) faster, melody modulated up a fourth (IV)
 - Hold dance, go fast around in a circle
 - Add one couple in the middle. Two arrows on the ground point to the people who will dance in the circle during the next fast B section.
- Share Marko Skače x 15 dancing video
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sH4PEn_x0tU
 - Discussion: What are different styles, musicians, and settings you saw in these examples? Is one version more authentic than the others? Are there any musical characteristics that many of these versions had in common? Can you think of a song from your culture that has so many diverse musical variations?
- Solfege practice
- Break into 2 groups: 1) play barred instruments 2) create their own dance choreography
- Put it all together!

VISUAL RESOURCES (score, tone ladder)

The visual resource displays a score and a tone ladder. On the left, there are four hand gesture icons with corresponding letters: a blue hand with 'S', a yellow hand with 'M', an orange hand with 'R', and a red hand with 'D'. The score consists of four lines of notes. The first line has three blue 'SO' notes, a yellow 'MI' note, three blue 'SO' notes, two yellow 'MI' notes, two orange 'RE' notes, and two red 'DO' notes. The second line has two blue 'SO' notes, a yellow 'MI' note, two orange 'RE' notes, two yellow 'MI' notes, two orange 'RE' notes, and two red 'DO' notes. The third line has two blue 'SO' notes, a yellow 'MI' note, two orange 'RE' notes, two yellow 'MI' notes, two orange 'RE' notes, and two red 'DO' notes. The fourth line has two blue 'SO' notes, a yellow 'MI' note, two orange 'RE' notes, two yellow 'MI' notes, two orange 'RE' notes, and two red 'DO' notes. The tone ladder shows the pitch of each note, with 'SO' notes being the highest, 'MI' notes being the next highest, 'RE' notes being the next lowest, and 'DO' notes being the lowest.

CREDIT & REFERENCES

Credit to the esteemed educators who I learned this song from:

Doug Goodkin <http://douggoodkin.blogspot.com/>
<https://sforff.org/faculty-2/>

SongWoks Principles Highlighted

SongWorks I: Principles of Teaching and Learning

2. Students deserve an engaging learning environment in which they feel safe enough to demonstrate freely their understandings and skills through various types of participation.
7. Quality of life is enriched through music and singing.

SongWorks II: Principles of Teaching and Learning Music

2. The musicality that is critical to music performance is just as important in music study.

TIPS FOR TEACHING

- Song choice: Repetition in the text, great melodies and rhythms
- Listening questions: Give students something to discover for attention & curiosity
- Hook: Kids learn and sing the catchiest phrase of the song right away.
- Recordings: Meet culture bearers or share authentic sources on YouTube & give credit
- Prepare: Come to class prepared model the music. Strive to imitate the pronunciation, style, and timbre of an authentic musician. Consider incorporating aspects of the music that were originally present (e.g., game, hand slapping patterns, drumming).