

§ii – Option b) Harmonising a Folk Song

This question will require you to complete a piano accompaniment to a given folk song melody. The extract will be approximately 8-12 bars long and the four bars you must complete may occur anywhere within the extract. Study the bars which are given so that you can maintain the given style.

Study and preparation

Sing and play some folk songs. They can be found in various collections, such as:

- The New National Song Book (Boosey & Hawkes)
- Pentatonic Song Book (Schott)
- Collections of English Folk Songs, arranged by Vaughan Williams (Penguin)
- One Hundred English Folk Songs, arranged by Cecil Sharpe (Dover)
- Songs of England, arranged by Margaret Hargest Jones (Boosey & Hawkes)
- Songs of Ireland, arranged by Margaret Hargest Jones (Boosey & Hawkes)
- Songs of Wales, arranged by Margaret Hargest Jones (Boosey & Hawkes)
- Folk Songs of England, Ireland, Scotland & Wales, edited by William Cole (Warner)
- Complete Folk Song Arrangements by Benjamin Britten (Boosey & Hawkes)

In your preparation to work this question, consider the following points:

- Determine the tonality – is the extract major, minor or modal?
- Phrase the melody (if this is not given), taking note of rests in the vocal line. This will give you the cadence points. The cadences within the song should be varied, and will usually end with a perfect cadence.
- Study the figures in the given piano part and try to incorporate them into your answer. These figures may be varied melodically, but the rhythm should be maintained. They can also be used in other registers of the piano.
- Remember to vary the dynamics, bearing in mind the words which are given. If it is appropriate, indicate where the pedal should be used.

[Link to practice exercises](#)

[Link to accompaniment figurations](#)

[Link to cadences in folk songs](#)

[Link to modality](#)

Below we give various examples with comments which we hope you will find helpful.

Example 1 Clare's Dragoons (Vive Là).
Condensed from a poem by Thomas Davis.

In march time

f

When on Ram - il - lies' blood - y field The baf - fled French were

f

6 forced to yield, The vic - tor Sax - on back - ward reel'd Be - fore the charge of Clare's men. The

11 flags we con - quer'd in that fray Look lone in Y - pres' choir they say; We'll win them com - pa -

etc.

Note bar 3 – LH crotchet on the beat, RH quaver off the beat – as this pattern recurs. The piano introduction is derived from the semiquavers in the melody in bar 8. The rate of harmonic change is 2 chords per bar. In bar 11 the semiquaver pattern now appears in the LH. Rests are used effectively, and the music remains in the tonic key throughout. You should bear in mind that modulation in folk songs is usually quite simple.

Example 2 Annie Laurie
 Words founded on an old poem by Lady John Scott

Moderately Slow

Melody by Lady John Scott

Max - well - ton braes are bon - nie, Where ear - ly fa's the
 dew, And it's there that An - nie Lau - rie Gie'd me her pro - mise true; Gie'd
 me her pro - mise true. Which ne'er for - got will be; And for
 bon - nie An - nie Lau - rie I'd lay me doon and dee.

This Scottish folk song begins with an introduction based on the first phrase of the melody. The music begins in the tonic key – C major – and modulates to A minor before returning to C major. The harmony is one, or occasionally two, chords per bar, and the chords are presented in arpeggio form throughout. The cadences (bracketed) are clearly defined. Note how the arpeggio figure is used to maintain forward movement at these points.

Example 3 The Useful Plough
Poem by A P Graves

English 16th Century

Cheerfully *mf*

In praise of the use - ful plough, From off the ten a - cre field's
The loun - gers that go in silk, And all of that i - die

p *mf*

Con ped.

6

brow, Let lass - es and lads, Let dames and let dads Be lift - ing their voi - ces now! For
ilk. Their dain - ties so fine Wash down with red wine, And mock at plain bread and milk; Yet

11

how could we thrive Or ev - en sur - vive For want of store a - new Of drink and meat. How shoe our feet, Or
en - vy quite The ap - pe - tite And health - y cheek and brow And that sweet sleep, So calm and deep, That

17

clothe and house thro' cold and heat, With - out the use - ful plough, Lack - ing the plough, the use - ful plough? —
o'er the toil - worn limbs will creep, Of those that guide the plough, Those that guide the use - ful plough. —

Another arpeggio-style accompaniment, in 6/8 time. Notice that bars 1-4 and bars 11-14 are based on the root position of the tonic chord. From bar 15, dotted crotchet chords are used on the beat to harmonise the melodic sequence above. Bars 19-20 are based on a tonic pedal (F in the bass). The bracketed cadence (bars 9-10) is a V9 – I cadence; this progression is used again for the final cadence. The accompaniment has a clear texture and does not intrude upon the lively and moving melodic line.

Example 4 Where the Bee Sucks
Poem by Shakespeare

In brisk time Music by Thomas Arne

Where the bee sucks there suck I; In a cow - slip's bell I

lie: There I couch when owls do cry, when owls do cry, when owls do

cry. On the bat's back I do fly, I do

etc.

This accompaniment is a mixture of chords and rhythmic patterns. Note the quaver movement at the cadence in bar 6. Note the quaver – quaver rest pattern (bracket A), and the decorative 'bird call' effect of the semiquavers in bars 10-12. The quaver – quaver rest pattern returns to accompany the melodic run on the word 'fly' (bars 14-15). At bar 6 the music moves to the dominant key, for the remainder of the extract.

Example 5 The Roast Beef of Old England

Words and music by Richard Leveridge

Quick

When mighty roast beef was the

Eng - lish - man's food, It en - no - bled our hearts and en - rich - ed our blood; Our

sol - diers were brave, and our court - iers were good. Oh, the roast beef of old

Eng - - - land! And oh, for old Eng - land's roast beef!

Chord symbols: V, I, I, V, I, Vb, Ib, V, V, I in G, V7d in D minor, Ib, Ic, V, I

This vigorous and almost patriotic-style song is mostly accompanied by chords on the strong beats. Notice that the introduction is derived from similar figures in the melodic line. Beginning in C major, the music moves to the dominant key (G major) in bar 6, and returns to C major at bar 10, after a brief reference to D minor at *. The chords are tonic/dominant orientated – see the chord symbols marked in the score.

Example 6 The Mocking Bird Song


Southern Folksong

Tenderly

The musical score is written in 2/2 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two systems. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a whole rest for four measures, followed by the lyrics 'Hush lit-tle ba-by' and 'If that mock-ing'. The piano accompaniment features a steady arpeggiated pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. The second system starts at measure 6 and continues the vocal line with lyrics: 'don't say a word, Mam-my's goin' to buy you a mock-ing bird.' and 'bird won't sing, Mam-my's goin' to buy you a dia-mond ring.' The piano accompaniment continues with the same arpeggiated figure.

Hush lit-tle ba-by
If that mock-ing

6
don't say a word, Mam-my's goin' to buy you a mock-ing bird.
bird won't sing, Mam-my's goin' to buy you a dia-mond ring.


The interesting thing about this accompaniment is its sheer simplicity. The accompaniment is built over an arpeggio ostinato figure. The RH  figure pre-empts the quavers in the melody. The gentle 'rocking' effect enhances this lullaby, which is based on the pentatonic scale.

Example 7 Old Texas

American

Plaintively

I'm going to leave old Tex - as now, They've no more
use for the long horned cow, They've plowed and fenced my cat - tle
range, And the peo - ple there are all so strange.

This is another pentatonic melody based on F. (Notice that the 4th note (B \flat) and the 7th note (E) are missing in the melody line.) Notice also how the  figure is used in the accompaniment in both RH and LH, and how it is used to maintain the movement when long notes appear in the melody. Note the dominant 7th and 11th effects at the bracketed cadences.

Example 8 Csak egy szep lany van a vilagon

Traditional

Largo all'ongarese

mp espressivo

i ib VI aug 6th V i

6

ivb V in E \flat major I Vb7 in C minor i VI

11

V7 in E \flat major I V7 in C minor VI iib7 ic V7d i

This mid-European folk song is harmonised here with simple chords in a version for piano solo. It includes an augmented 6th chord, and moves from C minor to E \flat major. Note the use of accented passing notes (appoggiaturas), marked *. The final cadence is interesting – the two melody notes falling by step (here E \flat and D semiquavers) may rise by step before moving to the next harmony note.

Accompaniment figurations

Below are some examples of accompaniment figurations which could be used, based on the chords of the first 4 bars of Example 8. They are self-explanatory and demonstrate the construction of patterns by the 'injection' of rhythm and gesture into the chords. Play them, listening carefully for the basic harmony outline as in the original.

Example 9

Example 9 is a piano accompaniment figuration in 2/4 time, featuring a treble and bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The bass clef features a steady eighth-note accompaniment: G3, A3, Bb3, C4, Bb3, A3, G3.

Example 10

Example 10 is a piano accompaniment figuration in 2/4 time, featuring a treble and bass clef. The key signature has two flats. The treble clef has a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, with a slur over the first three notes. The bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment: G3, A3, Bb3, C4, Bb3, A3, G3.

Example 11

Example 11 is a piano accompaniment figuration in 2/4 time, featuring a treble and bass clef. The key signature has two flats. The treble clef has a melody of eighth notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, with a slur over the first three notes. The bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment: G3, A3, Bb3, C4, Bb3, A3, G3.

Example 12

Example 12 is a piano accompaniment figuration in 2/4 time, featuring a treble and bass clef. The key signature has two flats. The treble clef has a melody of eighth notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, with a slur and a '3' above the first three notes. The bass clef has a steady eighth-note accompaniment: G3, A3, Bb3, C4, Bb3, A3, G3.

NB Dynamics will be dictated by the mood of the words, and should be included in your answer.

Cadences in folk songs

All regular cadences are of course featured in folk songs. Modal cadences are dealt with below. Other cadences arising from 19th century harmonic procedures may be used in arranging folk songs.

Example 13

iiiib I

iiiib + 7th I
or V13

Where the melody ends Me – Doh (or mediant to tonic) the use of iiiib to replace Va is common. Example 13b (above) shows the same chord incorporating the 7th of the dominant (V) in the tenor. It could also be described as a dominant 13th.

Example 14

IVb V

Example 14 demonstrates the use of the Phrygian cadence, which occurs in early music – it is particularly effective in minor keys.

Example 15

V9

Example 15 demonstrates the use of a dominant 9th. Note the 4-3 suspension in the alto, which helps maintain the movement on the dotted minim D.

Example 16

V9

The dominant 9th (*) is used as an accented passing note.

Example 17

V11

This shows the use of the dominant 11th retained to become the tonic in I.

The use of the dominant 9th and 11th is fully explained in the LCM theory handbooks for grades 7 and 8.

Modality

Modes are used in harmonising folk tunes, as the melodies predate tonal harmony.

R. O. Morris, a distinguished scholar, wrote that reference to modal harmony is erroneous. Morris rightly draws our attention to the fact that modality is purely a melodic procedure; the chords are derived from the melody. Example 18 shows chords based on the notes of the Dorian mode. Refer to the LCM *Theory Handbook Grade 5* for illustrations of Lydian, Mixolydian, Ionian and Aeolian modes.

Example 18

Pre-18th century composers derived chords in this way, but they found they needed to alter the 6th and 7th degrees by using accidentals. This process is known as 'musica ficta' (literally 'fictional' or 'feigned' music). Modes in their 'pure' form are determined by the position of semitones; when musica ficta is used it destroys the original number and order of semitones, and the mode loses its original character.

Often the 'Tierce de Picardie' was employed, where a minor chord has a sharpened 3rd, thus changing it into a major chord. It is said that 'the 3rd of Picardie' was first used by the early French composer of that name.

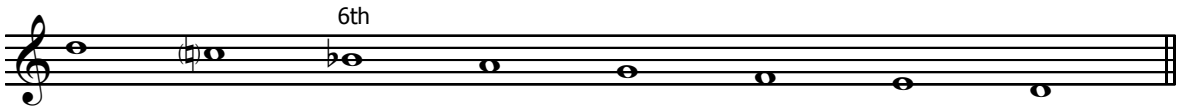
The examples below show the use of musica ficta – i.e. the use of accidentals to alter the pitch of the 6th and 7th notes in both ascending and descending forms of the Dorian mode.


Example 19

7th

Example 20

6th

Example 21 

Example 22 

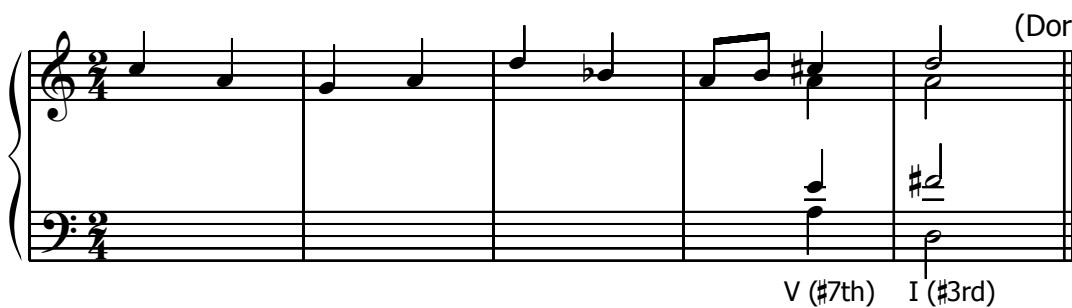
Example 23 

Final chord of Dorian Mode Here with #3rd (Tierce de Picardie)

All of these examples produce a mixture of both D melodic minor and D major, and if used without the accidentals, also the Dorian mode. Therefore, three distinct areas of tonality are employed. Note the avoidance of B \flat – C \sharp , an augmented interval found in the harmonic minor scale.

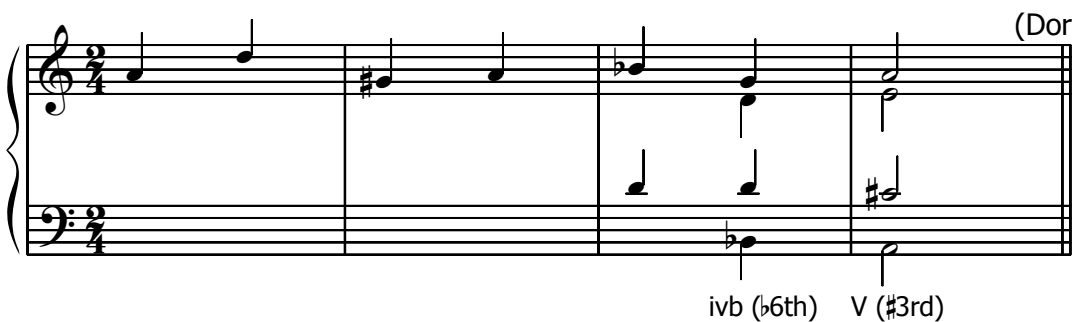
The chords formed in these examples are freely available in all positions as in normal harmony, as are all the elements of unessential harmony (e.g. passing notes, accented passing notes, auxiliary notes and suspensions).

In a modal context, accidentals are needed in both chords of a perfect cadence, as shown in Example 24:

Example 24  (Dorian Mode)

V (#7th) I (#3rd)

Similarly with the Phrygian cadence:

Example 25  (Dorian Mode)

ivb (b6th) V (#3rd)

All cadences can be decorated by the use of suspensions. Cadences in inversion are available, and also iib – V and iib – I. Avoid iib – I in a modal context. Always take care over accidentals, and avoid moving by diminished and augmented intervals.

Other progressions and cadences can be used employing chords from the original mode. In this case, the 7th note in the Dorian mode would be a C natural, and may be doubled as it is not the sharpened leading note, as in normal harmony. So the following would be acceptable:

Example 26

Example 26 shows a four-measure cadence in Dorian mode. The first three measures show a progression of chords: a triad of D-F-A, a dyad of D-F, and a triad of D-F-A. The fourth measure shows a cadence chord with a suspended 7th degree (C natural), marked with a double asterisk (**). A dotted line connects the C natural in the third measure to the C natural in the fourth measure, indicating the suspension. The bass line consists of a descending scale: D-C-B-A-G-F-E-D.

Example 27

Example 27 shows a four-measure cadence in Dorian mode. The first three measures show a progression of chords: a triad of D-F-A, a dyad of D-F, and a triad of D-F-A. The fourth measure shows a cadence chord with a suspended 7th degree (C natural), marked with a single asterisk (*). A dotted line connects the C natural in the third measure to the C natural in the fourth measure, indicating the suspension. The bass line consists of a descending scale: D-C-B-A-G-F-E-D.

Note in both examples the doubled 7th degree, indicated with a dotted line.

If using musica ficta, it would be possible to add G# in chords marked *, and C# in the chord marked **. In both cases this would form simple examples of modulation.

Practice exercises

Bracketed sections marked A and B indicate the kinds and lengths of portions of extracts which candidates will be asked to complete in the DipMusLCM examination.

Complete the following piano accompaniments. Remember that the style of the opening should be maintained and/or developed.

Welsh folk melody

1.

mp
Still

A
shows the bright sun - shine o'er val - ley and moun - tain, Still

B
war - bles the black - bird its note from the tree.

2.

Welsh folk melody

Andante

Near me, in

si - lence, my harp lies un - - - strung,

Weak are my fin - gers, and falt' - ring my tongue!

3.

French folk tune

Allegretto *mp*

Will you

mp *p* *p*

^A

love me, pret - ty one as I love thee? I'll be

^B

true and lov - ing if you're true to me.

4.

English folk tune

Allegro *mf*

Good Ro - bin

The first system of the score consists of a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a common time signature. It begins with a whole rest, followed by a half rest, and then a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The piano accompaniment is in treble and bass clefs with a common time signature. It starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand features a series of eighth-note chords and single notes, while the left hand provides a steady bass line with quarter notes and chords.

A

oft gave chase to the monks with sul - len face, till he made them drop their gear. And their

mp

The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked with a section label 'A' above the first measure. The lyrics are: "oft gave chase to the monks with sul - len face, till he made them drop their gear. And their". The piano accompaniment is marked with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The right hand has a simple accompaniment of chords and single notes, while the left hand continues with a bass line of quarter notes and chords.

B

hearts would quake And their lus - ty limbs would shake, if gal - lant Ro - bin Hood was near.

The third system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked with a section label 'B' above the first measure. The lyrics are: "hearts would quake And their lus - ty limbs would shake, if gal - lant Ro - bin Hood was near." The piano accompaniment continues with a simple accompaniment of chords and single notes in both hands.

5.

English folk tune

Vivace

mf

As me and my com -

mp *cresc.* *mf*

pan - i - on were set - ting four or five _____ And

B

tak - ing on 'em up a - gain, we caught a hare _____ a - live. _____

(Cadence in G)

6.

English folk tune

Con moto

f

A

Then up spoke the

The first system of the musical score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major) and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter rest, and then the lyrics "Then up spoke the". The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with the same key signature and time signature. It starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and features a rhythmic pattern of chords and moving lines. A section marker 'A' is placed above the vocal line at the end of the first measure.

ser - geant one day at his drill "Now

The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "ser - geant one day at his drill "Now". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic and harmonic structure as the first system.

B

who's good for nurs - ing? A cap - tain, he's ill".

The third system concludes the piece. The vocal line has the lyrics "who's good for nurs - ing? A cap - tain, he's ill". A section marker 'B' is placed above the vocal line at the beginning of the first measure. The piano accompaniment continues and ends with a double bar line.

Andantino

p

Take this for my fare - well and

mp espress.

p

con ped.

A

Detailed description: This system contains the first system of the musical score. It features a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked 'Andantino' and the key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics 'Take this for my fare - well and'. The piano accompaniment starts with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *p* (piano) for the vocal line and *mp espress.* (mezzo-piano, expressive) for the piano accompaniment. A first ending bracket labeled 'A' spans the final two measures of this system.

lat - est a - dieu. Sing wil - low wil - low wil - low, write

Detailed description: This system contains the second system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'lat - est a - dieu. Sing wil - low wil - low wil - low, write'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same melodic and bass lines as the first system. The first ending bracket 'A' from the previous system concludes at the end of this system.

B

this on my tomb, that in love I was true.

Detailed description: This system contains the third system of the musical score. The vocal line begins with a first ending bracket labeled 'B' and continues with the lyrics 'this on my tomb, that in love I was true.'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same melodic and bass lines. The system concludes with a double bar line.

(Ending adapted)

8.

American folk melody

Allegretto

'Twas in the month of Au - gust or the

mp

A

Detailed description: This system contains the first four measures of the piece. The vocal line is in G major, 6/8 time, with lyrics: "'Twas in the month of Au - gust or the". The piano accompaniment is in the same key and time, starting with a piano (*mp*) dynamic. A first ending bracket labeled 'A' spans the final two measures of this system.

mid - dle of Ju - ly One eve - ning I went

B

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5 through 8. The vocal line continues with lyrics: "mid - dle of Ju - ly One eve - ning I went". The piano accompaniment continues. A second ending bracket labeled 'B' spans the final two measures of this system.

walk - ing a fair maid - en I did spy.

Detailed description: This system contains the final two measures of the piece. The vocal line concludes with lyrics: "walk - ing a fair maid - en I did spy.". The piano accompaniment concludes with a final cadence.

Andante

I dreamed a dream the oth - er night,

The first system of music features a vocal line in treble clef and piano accompaniment in grand staff. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by the lyrics 'I dreamed a dream the oth - er night,'. A section marker 'A' is placed above the final measure of the vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

low - lands, low - lands a - way my John, my love she

The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'low - lands, low - lands a - way my John, my love she'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note bass line and chords. A section marker 'A' is placed above the final measure of the vocal line.

came dressed all in white. My low - lands a - way.

The third system concludes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'came dressed all in white. My low - lands a - way.'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note bass line and chords. A section marker 'B' is placed above the first measure of the vocal line.

10.

Scottish folk tune

Andante espressivo

mp

A

There is not in the wide world a

mp

con ped.

The first system of the musical score features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked 'Andante espressivo' and the dynamic is 'mp'. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics 'There is not in the wide world a'. A fermata is placed over the first measure of the piano accompaniment. A first ending bracket labeled 'A' spans the final two measures of the system.

val - ley so sweet. As the vale in whose bo - som the bright wa - ters meet; O the

The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'val - ley so sweet. As the vale in whose bo - som the bright wa - ters meet; O the'. The piano accompaniment is mostly empty, with a few notes in the final measure. A fermata is placed over the final measure of the piano accompaniment.

B

last rays of feel - ing and life must de - part, Ere the bloom of that val - ley shall fade from my heart.

The third system continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'last rays of feel - ing and life must de - part, Ere the bloom of that val - ley shall fade from my heart.' A first ending bracket labeled 'B' spans the first two measures of the system. The piano accompaniment is mostly empty, with a few notes in the final measure. A fermata is placed over the final measure of the piano accompaniment.

(Ending adapted)

11.

English folk tune

Allegro brioso

f

A

O - li - ver rose and gave her a drop.

mf

ff *mf*

Hee - haw gave her a drop, which made the old wo - man go hi - pe - ty hop.

B

If you want an - y more you can sing it your - self!

(adapted)

Allegretto *mf* A

One man shall mow my mea - dow, _____ Two

B

men shall ga-ther it to - ge - ther, _____ Two men one man, and one more shall

f

shear my lambs and ewes and rams, And ga - ther my gold to - ge - ther. _____