

INTRODUCTION

This collection of American folk songs is designed for:

1. Student string orchestras in upper elementary and middle schools.
(There is a 3rd violin part matching the viola part).
2. Three violin groups, or solos, with piano accompaniment.
3. String quartet.

These arrangements are not technically difficult, but some of them contain rhythmic challenges for fun and training. These are easily worked out in rehearsals. The rhythmic and tonal variations of these folk songs provide enjoyment to performers and audience alike.

THE SONGS

Except for Stephen Foster's "Oh, Susanna," these songs have no known author. As they were sung around the country they were changed in rhythm and melody by the minstrels leading the singing, so many different versions are found. The words also varied considerably. Most of the songs were used with dancing or with activity games of children, and many were sung without any instrumental accompaniment. All of these songs were well known in the 1800s.

"Billy Barlowe" is a children's activity song from Texas. One of the lines is: "'Let's go hunting,' says Billy Barlowe."

"Buffalo Gals" is an old minstrel song whose name was changed by the minstrels depending on where they were singing. Today's audiences know this song from its appearance in the movie *It's a Wonderful Life*.

"Go Down Moses" and "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho" are Negro spirituals that came from the South.

"Old Joe Clark" is a square dance tune from Appalachia. Hundreds of stanzas were written to this tune. "Home on the Range" is a cowboy song from Texas, and "Sweet Betsy From Pike" is a song about travelers going westward.

"Jim-Along Josie" is a play-party song in which the dancers sang and clapped their own music. "Jim-Along" was also sung as "Come Along."

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BILLY BARLOWE

American Folk Song
Arranged by WILLIAM STARR

Fast (♩ = 144)

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello
String Bass
Piano

1 2 3 4 5

Detailed description: This block contains the first five measures of the musical score. It features five staves for strings (Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello, and String Bass) and a grand staff for the piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Fast' with a quarter note equal to 144 beats per minute. The dynamics are marked 'f' (forte). The strings play a rhythmic accompaniment of quarter notes, while the piano provides a harmonic accompaniment of chords.

Vln. 1
Vln. 2
Vla.
Cello
Str. Bass
Pno.

6 7 8 9 10

Detailed description: This block contains the next five measures of the musical score, measures 6 through 10. The instrumentation remains the same as in the previous block. The piano part continues with its harmonic accompaniment. The string parts continue with their rhythmic accompaniment. The key signature and time signature remain consistent with the previous block.

BUFFALO GALS

American Folk Song
Arranged by WILLIAM STARR

Moderate, with spirit (♩ = 84)

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

String Bass

Piano

1 2 3 4 5 6

Detailed description: This block contains the first six measures of the score. It features six staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello, String Bass, and Piano. The tempo is 'Moderate, with spirit' at 84 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The music is in a 2/4 time signature. The first measure is a whole rest for Violin 1. The second measure starts with a forte (f) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno.

7 8 9 10 11 12

Detailed description: This block contains the next six measures of the score, measures 7 through 12. It features the same six staves as the previous block. The music continues with similar rhythmic patterns and dynamics. Measure 10 includes a forte (f) dynamic marking. The score concludes with a final cadence in measure 12.