

Oalla Mohololi *Sotho song from South Africa*

A ceremonial song, Oalla Mohololi is performed when young boys return from an initiation ceremony. The piece also includes a second ceremonial song, Somagwaza.

I have set the piece as a canon in 12 parts. It can be sung straight through as a song, but also works either with groups of singers staying on just one part while others are added, or as a canon in as many parts as you wish to include. The intention is to create an open piece of music, freely improvised using as many lines as you wish. There is no right way to perform it since it already combines two songs with riffs and instrumental lines.

Some parts are in direct imitation of others. For example voices 1 and 2 can make a simple chant together, either repeating their own part or following each other over both parts. The piece works with just these two parts, but voice three can also be added either by another vocal group or on an instrument. Voices 4 and 5 can be added at will; voice 4 would work particularly well as a solo. Voices 6 to 8 are instrumental riffs, based on the elemental rhythms that are found throughout the continent; they are optional and could be played on instruments. Voices 9 and 10 can be used either to further richen the texture, or as a separate section learned by all. Voices 11 and 12 are vocal riffs.

Have fun, and why not record a version using, say voices 1 to 3, and then perform other voices alongside a playback; or record riffs 6, 7 or 8, or 11 and 12, and perform voices 1 to 3 live. The possibilities are limitless!

Pronunciation here is close to Italian, with emphasized consonants (bimm-bomm) and slightly heavier vowels.

Oalla means "it cries." Most of the song is based on just the two words of the title: "It cries, look away."

The words of Somagwaza are poetic and defy translation, but the power of the two songs sung together is strong with a fervent ritual feeling.

Meguru *Kavango song from Namibia*

I first heard this simple hymn, which looks forward to heaven, sung by a South African male voice choir in clear harmony, full of parallel chords, and was fortunate to be given a manuscript copy. My version begins with unison sopranos; the other three female voices join in turn, singing a verse and chorus alone. This is then repeated over a male voice chant. The men take over and the women gradually drop out. The piece is used by the National Youth Choir to leave the stage singing. A male quartet can be left to finish the performance, singing the version which I heard.

Again, pronunciation is close to Italian, with emphasised consonants (memmbo) and slightly heavier vowels. The rhythm has a lilt, although this is a hymn.

*Lord, you are up there and we are down here.
Please be merciful to us.*

Yelli bo'dek dhaya fikri *Love song from Tunisia*

This was the most challenging piece to arrange, and was produced for Suzi Digby and her choir Voce to sing in Tunisia. It is a sad love song performed by a solo female singer, originally with many verses and little variation.

I have based the accompaniment on the instrumental sounds which I heard on a recorded performance, the aim being to create similar effects using the voice. Sopranos recreate the high flute sounds of the *ney*, while lower voices imitate the *maqrubah* (bagpipe), *aukrah* (double-reed pipe) and *qus'ah* (kettledrum). Canons at different octaves add another dimension, and I am pleased to say that it was well received and encored by the local Tunisian audience.

Here a slightly nasal tone will cut through the instrumental voices. The vocalizations for instrumental sounds attempt to create the tone of double reeds, flutes and percussion. Crossheads are used in the score to imply a freedom of choice with respect to pitch and serve to dictate the relative pitches within phrases only. Since a wide range of instruments can be found in this music, you may also use considerable freedom both in the sounds you choose, and in how many lines you include. The unison lines are decorated in slightly different ways, very much like the music of Irish folk song, and it is fun to highlight these differences; bring out the effect especially in the high soprano part.

*You whose parting made me feel lost and bereaved,
Please do come back to me, so that I may hold you in my arms.
Your love drove me mad.
My life and death hangs on a word from your mouth.
Please say yes, so I can be relieved of my distress.
Let me hear your voice which is like birdsong.*

*Do laugh for me, because I have been waiting for your laughter,
Which is as sweet as the flowers of the orchard.
I feel at a loss and wish for nothing but to be next to you.*

Oalla Mohololi

Sotho ceremonial song from South Africa

Dignified ♩ = 100

arr. Mike Brewer

VOICE 1
Oal - la, oal - la, oal -

VOICE 2
Mo - ho - lo - li! Mo - ho - lo -

VOICE 3
Ha - we, ha -

VOICE 4
Me - ooe, nta - te ooe! Me - ooe,

VOICE 5
Ke t'ho tse kan - goa - ne mot - le

VOICE 6
Bim - bom - bim - bom - bim - bim bah! Bim - bom - bim -

VOICE 7
Dank dan - ka dank dank dan - ka! Dank dan -

VOICE 8
Dih dih dih doo doo doo dih doo dih doo dih doo! Dih dih dih doo

VOICE 9
Oal - la, oal - la, oal - la mot - le li t'ha beng.

VOICE 10
So - ma - gwa - za mna yo - - weh,

VOICE 11
Hey, mna yo - - weh. So - ma -

VOICE 12
Hey, mna yo - -

Meguru

Kavango song from Namibia

(Sopranos 1 & 2, Altos 1 & 2, Tenors 1 & 2, Basses 1 & 2)

Relaxed ♩ = 80

arr. Mike Brewer

SOPRANO *mf*

Nam - pi - li lu - li ro - nge ka - pi, nga tu - ka ji ga - wa -

S *mf*

- na. Nam - pi - li lu - li ro - nge ka - pi, nga tu - ka ji ga - wa -

A *mf*

Nam - pi - li lu - li ro - nge ka - pi, nga tu - ka ji ga - wa -

S

- na. Me - gu - ru, mem - bo, ye tu ye - ne ne. Me - gu -

A

- na. Me - gu - ru, me - gu - ru, mem - bo, ye tu ye - ne ne. Me - gu -

S

- ru, mem - bo, ye tu ye - ne ne. Me - gu - ru, mem - bo, ye - ne

A

- ru, mem - bo, ye tu ye - ne ne. Me - gu - ru, mem - bo, ye - ne

S

ne. Nam - pi - li tu - ro

A

ne. Nam - pi - li tu - ro

T *mf*

Me - gu - ru, mem - bo, me - gu - ru, mem - bo, me - gu - ru, mem - bo, —

B *mf*

Me - gu - ru, mem - bo, me - gu - ru, mem - bo, me - gu - ru, mem - bo,

Yelli bo'dek dhaya fikri

Love song from Tunisia

(Sopranos 1 & 2, Altos 1 & 2, Tenors 1 & 2, Basses 1 & 2)

Lively ♩ = 108

arr. Mike Brewer

SOPRANO *ALL f* *gliss. gliss.*
Doh doh_ doh doh day_ doh doh_ doh doh_ doh doh_ day doh doh_

ALTO *ALL f* *gliss. gliss.*
Na na na_ na_ na_ na_ na_ na,

TENOR 1 *f*
Bim bim bim bim bim bim bim bim,

TENOR 2 *f*
Dom - a dom dom dom dom dom dom - a dom dom dom dom dom,

BASS 1 *f*
Zi zi zi zi zi_ zi_ zi_ zi_ zi,

BASS 2 *f*
Thum ma thum ma

S *3*
doh do_ doh_ doh doh_ day_ doh doh day_ doh_

A *3*
na_ na_ na_ na_ na_ na_ na_ na,

T1 *8*
bim bim bim bim bim bim bim bim,

T2 *8*
dom - a dom dom dom dom dom dom - a dom dom dom dom dom,

B1
zi_ zi_ zi_ zi_ zi_ 3 zi_ zi_ zi_ zi,

B2
thum - a ma thum thum - a