

THE EUPHORICS: Study Guide



The The Euphorics are a joyous, energetic a cappella quartet who, since 1983, have been delighting audiences internationally on radio, television and concert stages, at schools, festivals and special events of all kinds.

Individually, the members of the Euphorics, Joani Bye, Helen Davis, Bing Jensen, and David Steele, are powerful lead singers. Together, they create a rich and soulful blend with a repertoire of top-notch originals and innovative covers in a wide variety of styles. The Euphorics celebrate their passion for music with plenty of humour and dynamic audience interaction.

The elementary school performance

Through the wonderful and distinct language of song, The Euphorics present a joyful approach to singing without instrumental accompaniment. Using only their voices as a guide, they take their young audience on a journey through musical time: from the cave era, through the Middle Ages and Romantic period and into the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

With emphasis on audience participation, The Euphorics give an exciting demonstration of the major scale, chord formation and the function of melody, harmony and rhythm in song.

Hold onto your seat! We're going on a global journey. What better way to make exotic far-away places seem real than through music?

We're going to 17th century Germany, Africa, the southern U.S.A., Jamaica and home again. It's a small world and we all share one language... **the language of music.**

For teachers

The voice is the one natural instrument which your students have and use. No matter how limited facilities may be there are always the necessary instruments for singing, and something to sing about. The music of The Euphorics gives an idea of the scope of the voice as an instrument.

This study guide introduces your students to the voice, how it works and how it can be used. The activities and information should ideally be shared with the students before the Euphorics arrive, so that they will have background information and some things to listen for during the performance. Some activities will be useful as follow-up material to the performance.

Vocal styles from 1400 to the present

Madrigals: Unaccompanied part songs—usually for 4 to 6 voices, during the Renaissance (1400-1600 AD) in Europe. Complex songs written for fun and entertainment and performed by small singing groups.

Barbershop: Popular since the late 1800s. Musically uneducated people would sing improvised harmonies over popular melodies of the day at public gathering places such as barbershops.

Contemporary folk and country: Similar today to the traditional folk music it comes from, except for the use of electric instruments, amplification and commercial marketing.

Rounds: Identifiable by a recurring melody or theme, heard overlapping itself at different points throughout the song. Most people have sung "Row, Row, Row Your Boat", a simple, popular round.

Jazz: Evolved from a combination of spirituals, classical music and work songs. About 1900, jazz was born in New Orleans in the form of "ragtime" music. Jazz singers became popular in the 1930s and 1940s.

Rock and roll: Born in the 1950s and still popular today. Its' roots can be traced to Jazz, Negro spirituals, and work songs of the American South.

What is “A Cappella”?

A Cappella is singing without accompaniment. It is not a style of music, just a choice of instrumentation. Many groups such as Barbershop Quartets and Canadian groups such as The Nylons and The Euphorics perform a cappella. A Cappella singing is found in almost every style of music and is a part of the musical tradition of every culture around the globe.

Sometimes the singers in the group sing the same pitches (in unison) but most of the time they sing different notes that blend together (harmony). In a mixed group such as The Euphorics, the women sing the higher parts. Soprano is the highest, then alto. The men sing the lower parts: tenor and bass (of which bass is the lowest). In a men’s quartet, there are two tenors, a baritone and a bass.

The voice box

If we think of the voice as an instrument, it helps us to understand how it works and how singers learn to use it. Just like a woodwind instrument, the voice works when air is forced past the vocal cords and made to vibrate. The vocal cords are at the top of the windpipe and they work like a free reed. Air from the lungs is pushed up past the vocal cords by a wall of muscle called the diaphragm. The singer, just like the instrument player, controls volume, pitch and tone.

Talk about musical power!! Your voice can go up or down, fast or slow, soft or loud. (How loud? Just ask a grown-up about when you were a baby!)

Put your hand on your throat and hum. The vibrations you feel come from your voice box. With your hands on your throat, hum up, then down. Does the vibration seem to go up and down in your throat too?

The singers must rely on each other to keep the music flowing and in the correct key (neither too high nor too low, for example). Often the singers are providing accompaniment for the melody by singing the parts that the instruments would play.

The Euphorics: Post-performance work sheet

- 1 What language (or dialect) are these in? Match the language with the song and draw a line between them.

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Banana Boat Song | Xhosa (African dialect) |
| Xhosa Chant | Pidgin Jamaican/English |

- 2 Match the song names with the area of the world which they come from.

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Xhosa Chant | Italy |
| Banana Boat Song | South Africa |
| Gregorian Chant | U.S.A. |
| Amazing Grace | Jamaica |

- 3 The Canon Pachelbel is usually played by what instruments?

- 4 Match the scale numbers with scale syllables. Underline the numbers and syllables that make harmony with "Doh".

- 5 Pick a favourite song and sing it. Then try to sing harmony while a friend sings the melody.

- 6 Fill in the blanks:

- A A recurring melody is found in a _____.
- B Complex songs in the Renaissance were called _____.
- C _____ music was born in the 1950s.
- D In New Orleans, _____ music was born.
- E Contemporary folk/country music is similar to _____ music.
- F Early jazz was sometimes referred to as _____.
- G The madrigal was composed in _____.
- H The _____ singer plays an important role in a rock and roll band.
- I _____ music is improvised harmonies to popular melodies of the late 1800s.

The Euphorics: Work sheet *answers*

- 1 What language (or dialect) are these in? Match the language with the song and draw a line between them.

Banana Boat Song = *Pidgin Jamaican/English*

Xhosa Chant = *Xhosa (African dialect)*

- 2 Match the song names with the area of the world which they come from.

Xhosa Chant = *South Africa*

Banana Boat Song = *Jamaica*

Gregorian Chant = *Italy*

Amazing Grace: = *U.S.A.*

- 3 The Canon Pachelbel is usually played by what instruments?

Violin, Viola, Cello and Double Bass

- 4 Match the scale numbers with scale syllables. Underline the numbers and syllables that make harmony with "Doh".

1 --- Doh

2 --- Re

3 --- Mi

4 --- Fa

5 --- Soh

6 --- La

7 --- Ti

8 --- Doh

- 5 Pick a favourite song and sing it. Then try to sing harmony while a friend sings the melody.

- 6 Fill in the blanks:

A A recurring melody is found in a round.

B Complex songs in the Renaissance were called madrigals.

C Rock'N Roll music was born in the 1950s.

D In New Orleans, jazz music was born.

E Contemporary folk/country music is similar to traditional music.

F Early jazz was sometimes referred to as ragtime.

G The madrigal was composed in Europe.

H The lead singer plays an important role in a rock and roll band.

I Barbershop music is improvised harmonies to popular melodies of the late 1800s.

The Euphorics: Word search



Find these words:

A CAPPELLA

PITCH

TENOR

DYNAMICS

HARMONY

EUPHORICS

BASS

BARBERSHOP

UNISON

CHORD

ALTO

SOPRANO

METER

RHYTHM

CHANT

MELODY

HUM

IMPROVISE

JOY

TUNING

QUARTET

CHAPEL

UNACCOMPANIED

RANGE

SCALE

CANON

The Euphorics: Word search: *solution*

