

Ritchie, Natalia
400 64th Avenue, 305W
St. Pete Beach, FL 33706
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Part 1 of 2 Submissions

National Endowment for the Humanities
“The Most Southern Place on Earth”
“Music, Culture and History of the Mississippi Delta”
Special Topics in Rural and Regional Studies: Cultural Heritage of the Mississippi Delta

An Orff Schulwerk Blues Composition for an Elementary Music Classroom

(This is part one of two email submissions. The second email is the original score I composed. I was unable to attach the score to this email because of the notation program.)

In this project, I have written an Orff accompaniment in the style of the blues for a fourth and fifth grade general music class. I have chosen the African American play party clapping song, “Miss Mary Mack”. I included a copy of the score. It demonstrates the way it can be used in the elementary music classroom. “Mary Mack” can be performed by children in many ways including a call response style, a jump rope game chant, or a hand clapping game.

I composed an arrangement to interpret this in a minor key using Carl Orff pitched and non-pitched classroom instruments, along with a vocal part and optional recorder line, doubling the glockenspiels. An improvisational B section can be added, if used with a higher grade level. This can also be used in a Call-Response style using the lyrics, echoing the last two words of every line, (<https://soundcloud.com/rgeyer-409956861/12-bar-blues-for-orff-1>).

Background Information

Carl Orff was a German Educator who according to an article in “liveabout.com,” <https://www.liveabout.com/the-orff-approach-2456422>, felt musical concepts for teaching children are best learned through singing, chanting, dance, movement, drama and the playing of percussion instruments. Improvisation, composition and a child's natural sense of play are encouraged. Folk music, rhymes and play party songs are mostly used in the Orff classroom. The American Orff Schulwerk Association (AOSA) is the national organization in the USA. There are local chapters all over the country and the world. I am a current member and past president of my Greater Tampa Bay Area Orff Chapter. Orff Levels are offered in college courses for music educators for both undergraduate and graduate level credit.

In my music classroom xylophones (soprano, alto, bass and contra bass bars), metallophones (soprano, alto, bass), glockenspiels (soprano and alto) are used as pitched percussion instruments. Castanets, bells, maracas, triangles, cymbals (finger, crash or suspended), tambourines, timpani, gongs, bongos, and conga drums are some non-pitched percussion instruments used in Orff classrooms. Recorders are taught in the third grade and often play a descant about the melody, or their response singing.

The rhyme I chose is often used by Ella Jenkins, a children's folk singer and musician. The following website, <https://www.arts.gov/honors/heritage/ella-jenkins>, states that, "Jenkins' work draws on African - American call and response music. Her re-popularization of game songs from her youth like "Miss Mary Mack" and "One Potato, Two Potato" couples basic chants and movement rescued from the folklore of American play, game songs, and ring chants. Her first recording, *Call and Response*, released in 1957 on Moses Asch's Folkways Records (now Smithsonian Folkways Recordings) has never been out of print and remains a bestseller

"Mary Mack"

Miss Mary Mack, Mack,
All dressed in black, black, black,
With silver buttons, buttons, button
All down her back, back, back, back.

She asked her mother, mother, mother
For fifty (fifteen) cents, cents, cents
To see the elephants, elephants, elephants
Jump (over) the fence, fence, fence

They jumped so high, high, high
They reached the sky, sky, sky
And never came back, back, back
Til the Fourth of July, (Ju)ly, (Ju)ly!



This Afro American clapping play-party song has many variations. This is the version I use in my music classroom. It can be used as a chant, a clapping song, and with an improvisation. The following file contains the Orff arraignment I composed for "The Most Southern Place on Earth, Culture, and Music in the MS Delta," in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Humanities, June 24, 2023.

Miss Mary Mack

Natalia Ritchie

♩ = 120

Em

Soprano and Alto Xylophone

Bass Metallophone

Counter Bass Bar

Bass Xylophone

Percussion

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 120. The score is divided into two measures. The first measure contains the vocal line and the beginning of the percussion parts. The second measure continues the vocal line and the percussion parts. The vocal line is: Miss Mar - y Mack - Mack - . The percussion parts are: Soprano and Alto Xylophone (rest in measure 1, dotted quarter note in measure 2), Bass Metallophone (rest in measure 1, whole note in measure 2), Counter Bass Bar (rest in measure 1, dotted quarter note in measure 2), Bass Xylophone (rest in measure 1, quarter note in measure 2), and Percussion (quarter note in measure 1, quarter note in measure 2).

(Mack - Mack) - all dressed in Black - Black - - (Black - Black) - Miss Mary

Sx Ax

BM

CBB

B Xyl.

Perc.

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a three-measure phrase. The key signature is E major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes a vocal line with lyrics, an acoustic guitar (Sx Ax) part with chords, a bass (BM) part with a steady bass line, a conga (CBB) part with a rhythmic pattern, a xylophone (B Xyl.) part with a melodic line, and a percussion (Perc.) part with a complex rhythmic pattern. The vocal line starts with '(Mack - Mack) - all dressed in' in the first measure, 'Black - Black - -' in the second measure, and '(Black - Black) - Miss Mary' in the third measure. The guitar part provides harmonic support with chords like E, F#, G, and A. The bass part plays a consistent eighth-note pattern. The conga part has a syncopated rhythm. The xylophone part plays a simple melodic line. The percussion part features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes.

Mack Mack (Mack Mack) all dressed in Black Black

Sx Ax

BM

CBB

B Xyl.

Perc.

(Black Black) moth - er she asked her

Sx Ax

BM

CBB

B Xyl.

Perc.

moth-er - for fif teen cents cents (cents cents) for fif teen

Sx Ax

BM

CBB

B Xyl.

Perc.

Musical score for six instruments: Saxophone Alto (Sx Ax), Bassoon (BM), Clarinet Bass (CBB), Bassoon Alto (B Xyl.), and Percussion (Perc.). The score is divided into two measures. The first measure has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. The second measure has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The Saxophone Alto part has notes with "cents" written below them. The Percussion part starts with a double bar line and a snare drum symbol.

Miss Mary Mack

Natalia Ritchie

♩=120

Em

Miss Mar-y Mack - Mack - (Mack-Mack)-all dressed in Black - Black -

5

Em Am Em

(Black - Black)-Miss Mary Mack Mack (Mack Mack) all dressed in Black Black

9

B A Em

(Black Black) moth-er she asked her moth-er - for fif teen cents cents

13

Em Em Em Scale

(cents cents) for fif teen cents cents (cents cents) E F# G A B C Eb E

Miss Mary Mack

Natalia Ritchie

Soprano and Alto Xylophone

$\text{♩} = 120$

Musical staff 1: Soprano and Alto Xylophone, measures 1-4. The staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a whole rest. The following three measures each contain a pair of eighth notes (Soprano and Alto) with a fermata over the pair.

5

Musical staff 2: Soprano and Alto Xylophone, measures 5-10. The staff continues with pairs of eighth notes and fermatas. The final measure (measure 10) features a key signature change to two sharps (F#, C#).

11

Musical staff 3: Soprano and Alto Xylophone, measures 11-14. The staff continues with pairs of eighth notes and fermatas. The final two measures (measures 13 and 14) contain whole rests, indicating the end of the piece.

Miss Mary Mack

Natalia Ritchie

Bass Metallophone

$\text{♩} = 120$

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8

8 9 10 11 12

13

13 14 15 16 17

Miss Mary Mack

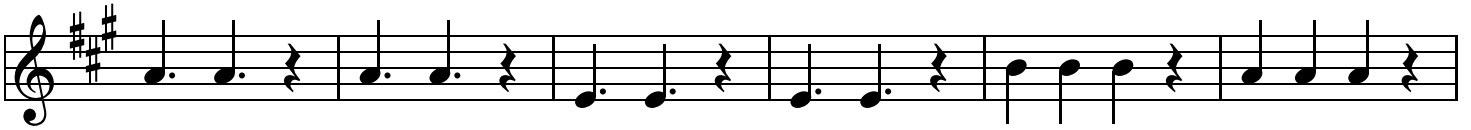
Natalia Ritchie

$\text{♩} = 120$

Counter Bass Bar



6



12



Miss Mary Mack

Natalia Ritchie

Bass Xylophone

$\text{♩} = 120$



6




12



Miss Mary Mack

Natalia Ritchie

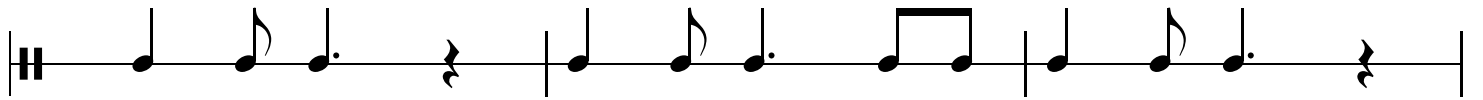
$\text{♩} = 120$

Percussion 

6



11



14

