

Polly Wolly Doodle

American Folk Song

The musical score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff are two verses of lyrics. The first verse is: "1. Oh, I went down South for to see my Sal, Sing - ing" and the second is: "2. Oh, my Sal, she is a___ maid - en fair, Sing - ing". Above the first staff is a chord symbol 'F'. The second staff continues the melody and includes the lyrics: "Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day; My___ Sal, she is a___" and "Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day; With___ curl - y eyes and___". Above this staff are chord symbols 'F', 'C7', and 'C7'. The third staff continues with lyrics: "spunk - y gal, Sing - ing Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day." and "laugh - ing hair, Sing - ing Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day." Above this staff are chord symbols 'C7', 'C7', and 'F'. The fourth staff is labeled 'REFRAIN' and has lyrics: "Fare thee well,___ fare thee well,___ Fare thee well my fair - y fay,___". Above this staff are chord symbols 'F' and 'C7'. The fifth staff has lyrics: "For I'm goin' to Loui - si - an - a, for to see my Su - sy -". The sixth and final staff has lyrics: "an - na, Sing - ing Pol - ly Wol - ly Doo - dle all the day._____". Above this staff are chord symbols 'C7' and 'F'.

Lyrics:

1. Oh, I went down South for to see my Sal,
Singing Polly Wally Doodle all the day.
My Sal, she is a spunky gal,
Singing Polly Wally Doodle all the day.

Refrain: Fare thee well, fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay,
For I'm goin' to Louisiana,
For to see my Susyanna,
Singing Polly Wally Doodle all the day.

2. Oh, my Sal, she is a maiden fare,
Singing Polly Wally Doodle all the day;
With curly eyes and laughing hair,
Singing Polly Wally Doodle all the day.

(Repeat refrain)

SINGING

Let students enjoy the fun of singing nonsense words and humorous verses. Soloists could be chosen to sing the written verses with the class joining in on the Polly Wolly Doodles and the Refrain. Some singers might make up their own words entertaining their friends in the same manner as Calypso singers do.

Change to a faster tempo when students seem to be comfortable with the song. Singing "For I'm goin' to Louisiana for to see my Susyanna" could turn out to be a humorous tongue twister for some children. Be sure the Louisiana is pronounced Loo-zee-ann-a

PLAYING

Tune your autoharps! Never was a two-chord song as easy to play as this one. Notice that the chord changes occur on the rhyming words day and fay. Help students make the chord changes easily by practicing the timing. While singing, tap shoulders on the beat until the word day, and then move the beat to the knees, tapping there until the next change on the word day. The next two changes are on the words fay and day.

Try to have several autoharps (in tune with each other) for children to play, and have students strum one beat per measure. Notice that the F and C7 are not marked on every measure. Just keep strumming the chord you begin with until a change occurs. At a faster tempo there may only be time for one strum every two measures.

CREATING

More doodling could be done on recorders or bells or glockenspiels. Notice the long tones and rests at the ends of phrases. Experiment with eighth-note trills on the pitches C and D and create a little musical motif there. A motif might also work after each Fare thee well.

LISTENING

Play the F chord on the autoharp and sing the first phrase, ending it without changing the chord to C7. The G you are singing will sound very dissonant with the F chord. Can the students hear that chord needs to be changed? Change to C7 and go on to the next phrase end holding the last note (F) which will sound very dissonant with the C7 chord. Again, let the ears of the students guide them to tell you to change the chord. You could then continue the song asking them to give you signals to change the chord such as described in the PLAYING section above. Intentional mistakes on your part will provide clues as to how well students hear the chord changes.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Steamboats on the Mississippi River in the 1800s served many purposes. On the famous excursion boats, sometimes called "Floating Palaces, the purpose was entertainment. "Polly Wolly Doodle" was one of the most popular songs of that time, and was no doubt sung there and throughout the surrounding states.