

Ukulele Yes!

The Ukulele Teacher's **eZine**
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JINGLE BELLS

James Lord Pierpont (1822–1893), arr. Jeff Hanlon

Teaching/Learning Notes

Focus On:

- ✓ Note reading
- ✓ Reading rhythms
- ✓ Ensemble skills

Key Points:

- Ukulele 2 and 3 maintain a two-bar rhythmic pattern for most of the verse section. Have each part practice these rhythms by clapping or playing on open strings. Then get the two parts to practice together so they can feel how the rhythms differ in the first bar and how they come together in the second bar. As this becomes secure, have Ukulele 1 players sing the melody while Uke 2 and 3 clap the rhythms.
- Uke 2 and 3 have chords in the chorus section. Strummed chords are best as they will provide some juice for a favourite part of the song, “Hey!”. If chording proves to be too much, however, have the students divide the notes among them within a part or omit notes in one part if they are covered in the other. Teach the chords with chord charts! I have my students “translate” chord charts into standard notation and vice versa.
- The Uke 2 part for the chorus is very singable. Demonstrate the part and teach the entire ensemble to sing the words of the chorus to this “new tune”. This will make it easier and more enjoyable for Uke 2 players to learn and to play.
- Uke 1 carries the melody all the way and so will need to be a strong section! This is especially true for the verse section as Uke 2 crosses the melody to play higher pitches. This will make it more difficult for the melody to be clear to the audience. Also, Uke 1 must play with rhythmic precision and confidence. For every second bar of the verse section Uke 1 provides the downbeat for the off-beat rhythm in the lower parts.

Suggestions for Extension and Enrichment:

- Challenge Ukulele 2 and 3 to alter the two-bar rhythm of the verse section! One possibility is to have the parts mimic the laughter (“Ha, ha, ha”) that follows the words “laughing all the way” in bar 12 of the arrangement.
- Each part of the arrangement is clearly defined in terms of function, and does not change. This simplifies each part and allows players of differing abilities to contribute according to their strengths. Probably the strongest players should take on Ukulele 1. If you want to challenge all members of your ensemble, have players trade parts on the repeat or between sections (verse and chorus).