

THE LOST BOX OF STORIES

RESOURCES BY JOHN WEBB & CLARE MURPHY

Y BOCS STORIÀU COLLEDIG

ADNODDAU GAN JOHN WEBB & CLARE MURPHY



A MID WALES MUSIC TRUST PRODUCTION WITH SINFONIA CYMRU AND:

CYNHYRCHIAD YMDDIRIEDOLAETH CERDDORIAETH CANOLBARTH CYMRU GYDA SINFONIA CYMRU A:

WELCOME | CROESO

The Lost Box of Stories is a children's music and storytelling show aimed at primary school pupils, written by composer John Webb and storyteller Clare Murphy.

During the show the children will not only hear stories from around the world, but also take part, singing, moving, and creating sounds to help the story-telling.

This Teacher's pack will help you prepare your class for the visit, so they can get the most out of the show. You will find:



The stories | Y storïau..... 3

Guide tracks can be found at <http://bit.ly/2EJaSwO>

We have also emailed them to each participating school.

The songs | Y caneuon..... 4

Please learn these two songs with your class before coming to the show.

Teaching the songs | Dysgu'r Storïau.....7

Creating more stories | Creu mwy storïau 9

The instruments and musicians | Yr offerynnau a'r cerddorion..... 10

Project team | Tîm y prosiect.....12

We look forward to meeting you at the theatre and hope you enjoy the show!

THE STORIES | Y STORïAU

The Lost Box of Stories brings together four stories from around the world: from Africa, Wales, China and Mexico.

The African stories

The story which provides a framework for the whole show is the African story of Anansi and the Sky God. Anansi is one of the most important characters in African and Caribbean folklore. He is a god, but sometimes takes the form of a spider or a man in his stories (so he's actually the original spider-man!).



Anansi is a 'trickster' character: he always likes to change the status quo, to upstage people, and is by turns heroic, arrogant or cowardly. Loki (from Norse myth) is a similar type of character: always playing tricks!

For your class:

Before you come to the show, you could introduce the character of Anansi by reading one of his stories, though please don't read the story of 'Anansi and the Sky God' as we'd like to keep this as a surprise in the show.

A good one to start with is Anansi and the Yam Hills. You can find it at:

<http://bit.ly/2DVfSgF>

Have a look at this website:

<http://bit.ly/2DvROnW>

for more information about Anansi.

In the Lost Box of Stories, Anansi's character is represented by the bassoon.

The other stories

It would spoil the stories if you told them to the children before they come to the show, but here's a little bit of information in case any of your class are asking you questions!

The Welsh story

In ancient stories (in Wales and elsewhere) fairies aren't necessarily always nice, friendly creatures! This story is a ghost story, but not too scary: it's almost like something from Dr Who! This story features the harp.

The Chinese story

... is about a Stonecutter who works on a mountain but wishes he had a better life. The story features lots of different sorts of music representing the sun, the clouds, the wind and the rocks.

The Mexican story

... explains how music came into the world. In some of the performances it will feature a song created and performed by one of the classes attending the show.

PROJECT SONGS – LYRICS | CANEUON Y PROSIECT – GEIRIAU

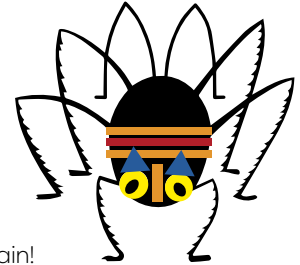
We'd like you to teach your class two songs which will feature in The Lost Box of Stories.

1. Where are the stories?

Background

Anansi manages to get the box of stories from the Sky God, but then he accidentally drops it. He spends the rest of the show trying to find the stories again!

This song is a chorus which we'll all sing between each of the stories in the performance. Below are the words, and the tune. The sing-along guides for both songs have been emailed to your school and are also available at <http://bit.ly/2EJaSw0>



LYRICS | GEIRIAU

ACTIONS | SYMUDIAD

Where did the box go, Anansi? **Hands out, shoulders shrug**
 You dropped it from the sky **Finger traces line down**
 Where are the stories, Anansi? **Finger waggles to tell Anansi off**
 Where did they go? **Hands out, shoulder shrug**

Repeat verse

You travel the world **Footsteps**
 Looking for the stories **Look around – hand at forehead**
 Searching both high and low **Hands up/down for high/low**
 Spinning your web **Spin hands together then fingers out on 'web'**
 Always try to catch them **Clap on 'catch'**
 Where on earth did they go? **Hands out, shoulder shrug**

Repeat the first verse

Spoken in time:

Tiptoe, tiptoe, spin your web **Fingers tiptoe, hand spin, fingers out on 'web'**
 Tiptoe, tiptoe, spin your web **Fingers tiptoe, hand spin, fingers out on 'web'**

Twice as fast:

Tiptoe, tiptoe, spin your web **As above**
 Tiptoe, tiptoe, spin your web **As above**

Big build up then:

Whoa – Gotcha! **Start low, get higher, grab on 'Gotcha'**

The song is sung 4 times during the show, but the final time the words are slightly different because we, the humans, have now got the stories. The first four lines (and their repeat) are changed. This is on your audio recording.

We've got the stories Anansi **Point to self**
 They fell down from the sky **Finger traces line down**
 We've got the stories Anansi **Point to self**
 Don't let them die **Finger wag**

PROJECT SONGS – LYRICS | CANEUON Y PROSIECT – GEIRIAU

2. Suo Gân

Background

Suo Gân is a traditional and very famous Welsh folk song. It is originally a lullaby for a child. You can find versions of it very easily on YouTube.

In the story you'll hear in The Lost Box of Stories, Sion ap Sienkin is lulled asleep by beautiful, magical music which he hears whilst he's out walking. The audience will sing one of the verses of Suo Gân (with the last line slightly altered) for this magical lullaby.

The speed of the song is slow and steady, and the piece is sung quietly:

LYRICS | GEIRIAU

Sleep my darling, night is falling
Rest in slumber, sound and deep
I would know why you are smiling
Smiling sweetly as you sleep
Do you see the angels smiling?
As they see your rosy rest
So that you must smile an answer
Smiling sweetly as you sleep.

TEACHING THE SONGS | DYSGU'R CANEUON

There are three key things which will help with learning a song.

- Listening to the audio guides provided. Make sure the children do listen to it and don't always sing along to it. If they sing along, they probably won't be able to hear whether they're singing it correctly!
- Knowing the words – go over these with the class, perhaps even speaking half a line at a time and letting the class finish off the rest. Or leaving out words, with the class putting them in.
- Breathing – having full lungs of air can really help volume and tuning!

Posture

The best posture for singing is one which is relaxed but upright, allowing the lungs to fill. If standing, place feet a shoulder width apart, keep knees relaxed and upright. If seated, sitting slightly forward (so not relaxing into the back of the chair), and upright.

Warm-ups:

- Tongue twisters are great for pronunciation. Try these, as well as any you know:

“My Mummy may move to Miami,
or maybe my Mummy may not”

“Red lorry, yellow lorry”

“Spaceship shaped chips”

- Saying the word ‘**Meeooow**’ very loudly and slowly takes the mouth through every shape needed for all vowel sounds we use whilst speaking. Doing this can help the class feel the shapes their mouths make, and the exaggeration we often have to use to sing well.

- **Sirening:** following the shape of a finger as it travels up and down in the air, helps singers to explore their range. This can be done on an ‘oooh’, and ‘aaah’ or even a ‘Mmmm’ sound. Different children in the class can have a go at directing each other for this.
- Singing simple, fun songs, such as call and responses or rounds, can be really great for warm-ups. See if you can find some of these to use:

‘Bella Mama’

‘Nanooma’

‘London’s Burning’

‘Timbalayo’

- **Breathing:** Practice breathing with the class – pulling the breath in through the nose, and letting it out slowly through the mouth. Try this pattern but alter the number of beats, moving from 4 to 5 to 6, 7 etc.

- 4 beats breathe in
- 4 beats hold
- 4 beats breathe out

In simple warm-up songs practice with the class taking in a deep breathe before singing each phrase, but making sure to do it silently!

Meeooow!

Smile!

Smiling while singing can really change the sound – making it fuller and brighter.



TEACHING THE SONGS CONT. | DYSGU'R CANEUON

If the class seems to be singing quietly, breathing and smiling can really help. Try not to ask them to 'sing louder' as this can lead to shouting. Instead, try to get them singing in a larger room, but leading them from the far side of it – projecting their voices over a larger space can really help.

Tips for singing 'Where did the box go?'

- **Be ready for lines which start after rests** – counting out loud with the class in time to the music can help with this, as long as you then encourage them to do it in their heads later on!
- **Try and characterise some of the lines:** 'Where did the box go, Anansi?' could sound quite cross, for instance.
- **Sometimes choosing an important word to emphasise** in a phrase can really help to focus and project the lyrics (as well as giving meaning).

For instance 'web' in 'spinning your web'. These can sometimes be also emphasised by the action as well.

Tips for singing 'Suo Gân'

- **The song is quiet, but still needs lots of focus in the singing.** If the singing is a bit too quiet, and feels like it's collapsing, it probably needs more breath support behind it. So, makes sure everyone breathes deeply before each phrase.
- **Practice blowing out a full breath slowly:** this will help the class develop the support they need to sing a long, sustained melody.
- **Make sure there's lots of breath for the word 'rosy'** – which is the highest note in the piece!



ACTIVITIES | GWEITHGAREDDAU

Creating More Stories

Anansi is a trickster spider-man who sets out to find The Sky God's story box. In it are all kinds of stories from all over the world. Here are some ideas for creating stories to add to the story box:

1. Writing a traditional story

Have you ever been told a traditional fairytale or a myth or a saga by someone in your family or a neighbour or a friend?

Can you write/draw your version of it to add to the Story Box?

Traditional tales are stories like: Little Red Riding Hood, The 12 Swans, Hansel and Gretel, Loki and the Wall of Asgard, Thor's Hammer, The Children of Lir, 12 Dancing Princesses, The Frog Prince, Puss in Boots. There are at least 6 million 452 thousand 111 more than the ones we have listed here.

Please write on it who told you the story (if you can remember!)

2. What if

Another good way to make stories to add to the Story Box is to play the game of "what if"...

Of course there are 7 million 589 thousand 318 other possibilities for you to suggest on this what if!

Once, long ago in Wales, there was a magic tree. No one would ever sit under it or touch it.

- * What if... one day someone did?
- * What if the tree started to walk around?
- * What if the tree was a portal to another world?
- * What if someone cut the tree down to turn it into furniture?
- * See what other what ifs your class comes up with.

Write the story of the day that the tree... (choose one what if...).

Once there was a stone statue carved on a mountainside in China.

- * What if one day it disappeared?
- * What if one day it came to life?
- * What if one day it started to fart or sweat or cry?
- * What if one day another statue appeared beside it?

Write the story of what happened the day the statue... (choose one what if and make a story from it).

Once upon a time there was a boy called Jack who lived with his mother. He took the cow to market to sell it, and got given magical beans instead of money.

- * What if Jack didn't go to the market?
- * What if Jack got given a superpower instead of the magical beans?
- * What if Jack didn't find a giant at the top of the beanstalk, what if it was a Hippo who was addicted to chocolate?
- * What if Jack's mother went to market instead of Jack?
- * What if it wasn't a beanstalk but a ladder?

Write the story of one of these what ifs.

THE INSTRUMENTS AND MUSICIANS | YR OFFERYNNAU A'R CERDDORION

There are five musicians in the Lost Box of Stories, and they play in all the stories, sometimes having the role of a soloist. The musicians are all members of Sinfonia Cymru, a professional chamber orchestra which performs all over Wales as well as much further afield. Here's some information about the instruments for you and your class so you can explore them before (or after!) the performance.

Bassoon – played by Cat McDermid

This is the lowest member of the woodwind family (other members are: Flute, Oboe, Saxophone and Clarinet). The musician plays it by blowing into a reed: this is made of two short pieces of bamboo tied together. When done correctly, the reed vibrates, which creates the basic sound for the instrument.

The bassoon sometimes plays quite comical music, but when it plays high it can also sound plaintive and sad. In The Lost Box of Stories the bassoon is used to sometimes represent Anansi.

Here's an introduction to the bassoon:

<http://bit.ly/1rDNF5b>

And a performance:

<http://bit.ly/2EIF3nr>

French Horn – played by Jon Farey

Originally the French Horn was a single coil of brass tubing which would have been played by horseman to let one another know where they were (for instance in a forest). Gradually, the instrument developed by adding further tubes and levers (called valves).

A sound is made by the player buzzing the lips into the mouthpiece. The player normally has their hand in the bell of the French Horn. Usually this doesn't affect the sound, but if they put their hand in further and widen their fist to plug the inside of the bell completely, the sound becomes stopped – a very buzzy and distinctive effect: listen out for it in the story of Anansi and the Sky God.

Here's an introduction to the French Horn:

<http://bit.ly/2GLp609>

And a performance:

<http://bit.ly/1oSxFfH>

Violin – played by Amy Heggart

The Violin is a member of the String family: other members include the viola, cello and double bass. Generally, it is played with a bow – which is made of hair from a horse's tail. The hair doesn't naturally grip the string, so players rub rosin on the bow hair (which is slightly sticky). Rosin is made of resin from a tree, which is hardened into small, handy blocks violinists can take around with them.

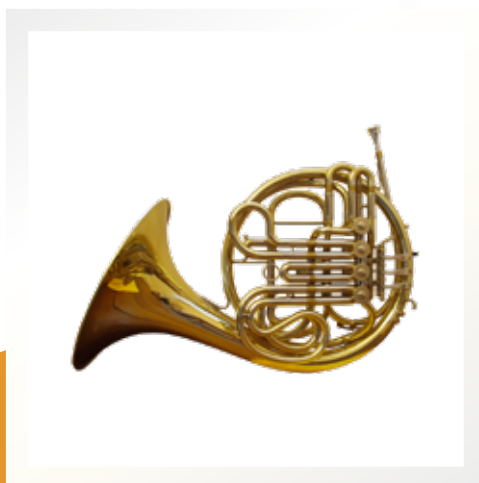
Violins can play a huge range of different types of music: they can be brutal and percussive (on the lower strings) or soar high above the other sounds in an orchestra. In The Lost Box of Stories you'll hear the violin doing both things, especially when it represents a cloud, breezily floating around, in the Stonecutter story.

Here's an introduction to the violin:

<http://bit.ly/2iNOvKF>

And an impressive busker's performance:

<http://bit.ly/1mDshGt>



THE INSTRUMENTS AND MUSICIANS CONT. | YR OFFERYNNAU A'R CERDDORION

Harp – played by Olivia Jageurs

Harp is one of the oldest instruments known to man – early versions of it are mentioned in Greek mythology. It's also come to be associated with Welsh folklore and folk song.

A concert harp is a beautiful instrument, and much larger than a folk harp. It is sometimes highly decorated, and has around 47 strings and 7 pedals. The pedals are used to change the pitch of the strings (so different from piano pedals). If the C pedal is pushed down, the pitch of all the C strings on the instrument will change to C sharp. If the C pedal is pushed up, all the C strings will become C flat. With the pedal in its central position the strings are 'natural'. Each note (C, D, E, F, etc) has its own pedal, so sometimes you'll see the players feet move almost as fast as their hands!

Harps can also glissando (the player zooming the hands across the strings very rapidly) as well as playing some very unusual sounds. In the story of Sion ap Sienkin you'll hear some of these, and in the Stonecutter you'll hear an effect called 'xylofono'.

Here's an introduction to the harp:

<http://bit.ly/2BTLsch>

And a performance:

<http://bit.ly/2EEY9L7>

Marimba – played by percussionist Paul Stoneman

The Marimba is originally an African instrument made of wood. It is a member of the percussion family. The percussionist in The Lost Box of Stories will play other percussion instruments as well as the Marimba, such as drums and cymbals.

The Marimba player can only play four notes as they hold 2 mallets (or beaters) in each hand. The mallets have wooden handles and woollen or felt balls on the end, which help to give the marimba it's very mellow and beautiful tone. If completely wooden mallets were used, the sound would be much harsher and they might also damage the instrument!

Watch out for the percussionist having to carefully (and swiftly!) move between instruments at certain points in The Lost Box of Stories.

Here's an introduction to the marimba:

<http://bit.ly/2nBB6t3>

And a performance:

<http://bit.ly/21WwCK6>



PROJECT TEAM

John Webb

John is a composer, performer and music educator. He has worked with a variety of organisations around the country, both writing pieces for them and running workshops. Most recently his work Take Flight formed the music for a community ballet, developed by the Royal Ballet, in Hull as part of their City of Culture 2017 celebrations. In 2016 he won a British Composers Award for Into the Light... which he wrote in collaboration with KS2 children in Buckinghamshire and was performed in the Royal Albert Hall by 2000 children (with the composer conducting). His KS1 show Sing a Story was performed in Wales in 2017, produced by Mid Wales Music Trust. www.johnwebbcomposer.co.uk

Clare Murphy

Clare is an internationally renowned storyteller who has worked with the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare's Globe. She performs, teaches, lectures and consults on the art of storytelling. www.claremurphy.org

Charlotte Mafham

Charlotte is an actor whose recent credits include: international tours as the Narrator and viola player in the stage version of Julia Donaldson's 'The Snail and the Whale', 'Melancholy' (Little Angel Theatre), 'Henry V' (Asylum Chapel), 'The Girl Who Cannot Die' (Brighton Fringe and Rose Theatre, Kingston) 'Troilus & Cressida' and 'Coriolanus' (Tristan Bates); 'Rumpelstiltskin' (UK Tour) and 'The Just So Stories' (The King's Head). Charlotte was a puppeteer in the finale parade at the Queen's 90th birthday 'Patron's Lunch'. Charlotte also performed in Sing a Story with Mid Wales Music Trust and Sinfonia Cymru at The Hafren in February 2017.

Mid Wales Music Trust

MWMT was established in 2009 to enable more people across mid Wales to experience and be inspired by high quality live music. We collaborate with many organisations including The Hafren, Wyeside Arts Centre, Theatr Brycheiniog, Pontardawe Arts Centre, Sinfonia Cymru, Arts Connection and Brecon Baroque Festival. Our music projects for schools have included Peter and the Wolf, The Story of Babar, a new production of The Tempest for primary schools and The Carnival of the Animals.

www.mwmt.org.uk | catrin@mwmt.org.uk

Sinfonia Cymru

Sinfonia Cymru is Wales's professional chamber orchestra, made up of outstanding musicians in the early stages of their professional careers. They perform all over Wales and beyond, and as well as giving performances in traditional concert halls they regularly perform in unconventional spaces including pubs and cinemas.

www.sinfoniacymrucy.co.uk | tammy@sinfoniacymrucy.co.uk

THANK YOU | DIOLCH YN FAWR

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