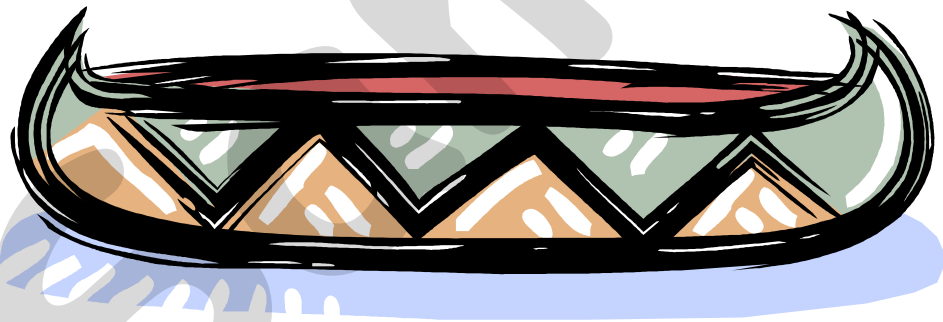


SIMON FRASER And the RAGING RIVER

A Musical
Play for
Elementary Students



Script and music
By
Gerda Blok-Wilson

Introduction

SIMON FRASER AND THE RAGING RIVER is dedicated to teacher extraordinaire, Ken Sharp, Principal, Anjula Corbin and the grade 4 students at École Spruceland, Prince George, British Columbia, 2007 who were studying Canadian history and early exploration of North America.

In elementary school, students respond eagerly to subject matter which includes creative drama, movement, music and visual art. The act of conveying curriculum this way enhances the student's ability to imagine, transform and authentically experience learning. Spruceland students added many of their ideas about what they learned in Social Studies class and improvised some of their own dialogue to carry the script between songs.

In experimenting with building arts resources which encourage language development and a "hands – on" approach to understanding curriculum, I have attempted to include pattern, repetition, rhythm, rhyme and song to develop verbal skills.

After two different performances of the play, I decided to write it out formally so other classes might be able to use it. My hope is that this play will encourage students and teachers to look at creatively transforming learning in the classroom with the skills and ideas available in their classroom. I think the show is appropriate for grades 3 – 6.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The cast is made up of Simon Fraser, John Stuart, Jules Quesnel, Michael (a made up crew member) and narrator which can be divided up so all members of the cast have spoken parts. The costumes were caps/handkerchief; gingham/red shirts; dark pants, socks and shoes. I had the narrators wear school T-shirt or black but anything would work. Students will have many ideas. Let them research voyageur clothing.

THE SET

The set can be anything from a big sign that says SIMON FRASER AND THE RAGING to a picture display of things that the students determine (canoe, diary, trapped wildlife,).

THE PLOT

Simon Fraser's journey on the river named for him is one of the greatest feats in the exploration of Canada. Although Fraser along with lesser known explorers, John Stuart and Jules Quesnel, failed to find a trading route to the Pacific Ocean, their exploration helped to open up North America and the province of British Columbia.

From the small trading post of Fort George, on the morning of May 22nd, 1808, Simon Fraser and his crew set out in four birch-bark canoes. Thirty minutes long, the "The Raging River" is a representation of his seventy – one day journey and raises issues including the affects of early exploration and the technologies used (transportation).

THE STAGING

Most of the action and speaking should occur downstage center. For visual effect, I recommend using different formations for each scene. Transitions can be used with the songs or tagged on by singing a cappella.

1. Imagine a Dream

After the whole cast finishes the song, they find their first formation on the stage. The narrator(s) introduce Fraser, Stuart and Quesnel.

2. Paddle Hard and Sing

The cast (including narrators) form into 4 canoes with the bows man in front so you can have as many as 6 – 8 in a canoe. Ask students to paddle to the beat. I had the students switch bows man each verse/chorus.

3. Riversong

Following the song create the sound of river rapids by having the students begin drumming against 1) stage stairs, 2) front stage, and 3) back stage wall to create the effect of river rapids. This can be done in staggered 3 – 4 groups so the sound builds. Finally everyone is front stage loudly stamping and patting knees. Ask students to decrescendo to very soft and then go right into scene 4.

4. Riversong chorus

While Fraser and Jules Quesnel rescue Michael, the cast sings the chorus and moves into the canoe formation again. Fraser, Quesnel and Michael join the canoes. The chorus can be repeated for the amount of transition time.

Soft steady drumming begins for Scene 5 and gets stronger when Fraser's crew is being chased. The drumming eventually fades.

5. Fur Traders Explorin' song

Ask students to develop movement.

6. Imagine a Dream (Reprise)

SCENE 1

Narrator: In 1808, as history tells us, there was an explorer, Simon Fraser, who had three jobs.

Narrator: As a partner in the Northwest Trading Company, the first was to build forts west of the Rocky Mountains.

Narrator: His second was to create a friendship with the local native people and establish trading relations with them.

Narrator: AND his third mission was to discover a way to get from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, to expand the Northwest Fur trading Company.

Narrator: Now, Simon Fraser seemed to be your regular adventurous explorer...

Narrator: ...very curious...

Narrator: ...somewhat brave, courageous and rugged...

Narrator: ...moderately organized...

Narrator: ...extremely literate...

Narrator: ...**AND**, **definitely**, a leader.

Narrator: He really seemed to have all the qualities that any explorer before him had.

Narrator: Although, at the age of 25, he was the North West Company's **youngest** partner.

Narrator: He was smart, intelligent **and** responsible...

Narrator: And he was always in search of ways to establish trading posts and forts to reduce the cost of his exploration and improve the North West Company's wealth.

Narrator: So, his boss, William McGillivray, chose Simon Fraser to find a route to the Pacific Ocean.

Narrator: He was told to follow a river that explorer and fur trader Alexander Mackenzie had tried 12 years earlier.

Song # 1 Imagine a Dream

1. Imagine a Dream

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♩=120

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with a whole rest followed by a quarter note G4. The middle staff is the right-hand piano accompaniment, starting with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The bottom staff is the left-hand piano accompaniment, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4.

5

The second system of the musical score begins at measure 5. The vocal line contains the lyrics: "ma - gine, i - ma gine a dream! Fol-low-ing a ri - ver to thesea. I -". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern as the first system.

9

The third system of the musical score begins at measure 9. The vocal line contains the lyrics: "ma - gine, i - ma gine a dream! To con-nect our coun-try, How great that would". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern as the first system.

13

be! In eigh - teen hun-dred and eight, Si - mon Fra - ser

mp

17

and his crew pad - dled four ca - noes down a ri - ver no one

21

knew. His boss made a plea: "Find a route

25

to the sea, so we can build fur trad - ing posts for the North-west com - pa -

2. Paddle hard and sing

Driven

Gerda Blok-Wilson

The first system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with a whole rest in each of the four measures. The middle staff is the right-hand piano accompaniment, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. It features a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff is the left-hand piano accompaniment, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line: G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.

The second system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with a whole rest in each of the four measures. The middle staff is the right-hand piano accompaniment, featuring a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff is the left-hand piano accompaniment, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line: G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.

The third system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "Pad - dle hard voy - a - geur, pad - dle hard and sing!". The middle staff is the right-hand piano accompaniment, featuring a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff is the left-hand piano accompaniment, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line: G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.

The fourth system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with the lyrics: "Pad - dle hard voy - a - geur, Let those pad - dles swing!". The middle staff is the right-hand piano accompaniment, featuring a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff is the left-hand piano accompaniment, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line: G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.

*Students imitate paddling their canoes.

3. Riversong

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$\text{♩} = 100$

The piano introduction consists of two systems of music. The first system shows a treble clef staff with a whole rest, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The second system continues this pattern, with the treble clef staff showing a melodic line of eighth notes and a final chord in the grand staff.

3

Ri - - ver spark - ling and clear,

The musical notation for the first line of lyrics shows a vocal line with a treble clef and a grand staff accompaniment. The vocal line has a dotted quarter note for 'Ri', a quarter rest, another dotted quarter note for 'ver', and a quarter note for 'spark - ling and clear,'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern as the introduction.

5

Ri - - ver wild - and free,

The musical notation for the second line of lyrics shows a vocal line with a treble clef and a grand staff accompaniment. The vocal line has a dotted quarter note for 'Ri', a quarter rest, another dotted quarter note for 'ver', and a quarter note for 'wild - and free,'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

7

Ri - - ver some - thing to fear,

The musical notation for the third line of lyrics shows a vocal line with a treble clef and a grand staff accompaniment. The vocal line has a dotted quarter note for 'Ri', a quarter rest, another dotted quarter note for 'ver', and a quarter note for 'some - thing to fear,'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.