



From the Top at Carnegie Hall
Episode 7: "Singing, Strumming and Skating"

Airing on PBS (check local TV listings)
Available online at pbs.org

Learning Activity

Title: *All Things Change*

Description: In this activity, students will connect the *idea* behind a choral piece – change – with its musical characteristics, using appropriate musical terminology such as rhythm, tempo, and dynamics. They will then work in groups to create short pieces that express similar feelings.

Grade Level: 9-12

National Music Standards: **4**, Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines; **6** Listening to, analyzing and describing music

Background

The young People's Chorus of New York sings a beautiful piece written by contemporary composer Jim Papoulis called *Panta Rhei* – Greek for "all things are in flux." The piece is unaccompanied except for a strong percussion line provided by long bamboo sticks that are pounded against the floor, and hand claps. In this activity students will listen for the musical elements that provide the sense of flux, movement, and change. They will also experiment with creating their own compositions that suggest change.



Francisco Nuñez and the YPC on stage at Carnegie Hall

Materials

Computer with media player; projector and speakers, if needed. Paper and pencils; staff paper for notation.

Activity Instructions

1) **Brainstorm** some of the musical elements that contribute to the mood and tone of a piece: rhythm, tempo, instrumentation, dynamics, form, etc. Ask students to name familiar choral works that express a strong emotion or mood (examples might be the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah* and "We Shall Overcome"). What is it about these pieces that creates such a powerful mood?

2) **Watch** the video segment that includes the performance. Ask students to listen for elements that suggest flux, movement, and change. Write these on the blackboard so that everyone can refer to them.

3) **Listen** again to the performance, while students take notes about what is happening in the music to convey the sense of movement and change. Some of the elements include rhythm (especially the syncopation and staccato phrasing), tempo, instrumentation (hand clapping, pounding), vocal style, and tonality (unresolved chords, atonality). Taken together these create a powerful sense of forward momentum, along with instability, excitement, and anticipation of the unexpected.

4) In small groups, ask students to **create their own short pieces** that represent change, movement, and flux, using some of the elements they have just identified.

Find out more!

Learn about the Young People's Chorus of New York

The Young People's Chorus was founded by Francisco Nuñez to reach into New York City neighborhoods and include children of diverse economic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. The Chorus is committed to musical excellence, has performed throughout the world, and is known for commissioning original works such as *Panta Rhei* from renowned artists. More than fifty choral works have been produced for YPC since 2001. Find out more about them at:

<http://www.ypc.org>

Learn about composer Jim Papoulis

New York-based composer Jim Papoulis is a versatile and successful artist who creates music for films, dance, ensembles, and solo performers, including Aretha Franklin, Christina Aguilera, and Shania Twain. He also established the Foundation for Small Voices, which works with children worldwide to create and present music that bridges "cross-cultural, generational, and ideological boundaries." Read about Jim Papoulis and listen to his music at:

<http://www.jimpapoulis.com>

<http://www.foundationforsmallvoices.org/>



Jim Papoulis conducting (photo courtesy of YPC)

Read the composer's notes to *Panta Rhei* (provided by Francisco Nuñez)

"The text of *Panta Rhei* combines a few phrases and words in Greek that speak to qualities exemplifying inner strength. The translation of *Panta Rhei* is *All things are in flux*, and through it I explore the rhythms, patterns, and cycles of life. The rhythms and vocal patterns are varied, as life is; the structure is as traditional as the cycles of life, with a strong female presence defining it. It is no coincidence that this piece is written for the female voice; I have been fortunate to be surrounded by many strong women throughout my life. My mother remains a major influence on the way I look at the world; my four sisters taught me the importance of remembering that women are first and foremost human beings who see the world with compassion, as do my own two daughters." – Jim Papoulis

Panta Rhei "all things are in flux"—Heraclitus, pre-Socratic philosopher 5th cent. B.C.

Voeethia "help!"

Metron Ahriston (best rhythm)

Metron resston (easiest rhythm)

Kteema es ai "possession for eternity"

Exclusive corporate sponsorship provided by



Foundation funding provided by



JACK KENT COOKE
FOUNDATION



Additional funding by
Helen and Peter Bing
E.H.A. Foundation

Production partners



WGBH

don mischer
productions

CARNEGIE HALL