

THE CUCKOO

The Day the Cuckoo Lost Her Colors A Mexican Folk Tale for Unison Voices

by Sally K. Albrecht and Jay Althouse
Recording Orchestrated by Tim Hayden

Reproducible
Student Pages
& Staging Notes
Included!

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(Note: Color cover art is included as a PDF file on the Enhanced SoundTrax CD)

See back cover for CD Track Numbers.
Performance time: approximately 20 minutes.



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FOREWORD

Folk tales are stories that have been passed down from generation to generation in a culture. But just like playing the “Telephone Game” at a party, the stories change as often as they are told and retold. *The Cuckoo* is based on such a tale from Mexico, recounting the relationship between the earth, the animals, and the gods. We can all learn from this wonderful tale, celebrating both heroism and kindness.

CAST OF CHARACTERS & COSTUMES

- Narrators:** Parts for 12 narrators are included in the script. Note: each four-line narration may be split in half and performed by two students. Narrators may wear bright, Mexican-style outfits. They may be located downstage right. May have a large book to read from. May have a stool, chair, or podium from which to perform.
- The Cuckoo:** Female. The lead character, has solo singing and spoken lines. Begins the musical wearing a variety of colored feathers which will need to be easily removed (perhaps multiple colored feather boas will suffice, tied around The Cuckoo’s wrist). The Cuckoo is full of herself and sings like an opera star at the start. Then the situation transforms her.
- Birds:** Any number of students may appear as birds of different colors, wearing “beak” hats and single-colored feathers (or feather boas). This group acts as the chorus throughout the musical.
- Chac:** Male or female. The god of rain and harvest, who looks after the crops. Spoken lines. Dressed in green, blue, and/or white.
- El dios del Fuego:** Male or female (if female, change Narrator 6 final line to “Making her way...”) The god of fire. Spoken lines. Dressed in red, gold, and/or black.
- Búho (Owl):** Male or female. The wise organizer of the birds. Has solo singing and spoken lines. Dressed in brown. May wear reading glasses and a mortarboard hat (optional).
- Conejo (Rabbit):** Male or female. Spoken lines and group singing. Dressed in white with rabbit ears and whiskers. Positioned downstage left.
- Topo (Mole):** Male or female. Spoken lines and group singing. Dressed in black with a pink nose, squinty eyes. Positioned downstage left.
- Chorus (opt.):** Any number of additional singers may be located on risers upstage or in the pit area, singing along. They may be dressed as other animals or in bright Mexican-style clothing.

SETTING

The set may be as simple or as elaborate as you desire. Flats may be decorated as scenes in the Mexican fields, with trees placed in the distance or along the sides of the stage. There may also be “holes” for Conejo and Topo placed downstage left.

Fire Scene: Students (may be birds or chorus members) should be in charge of creating the “fire,” waving bright orange, gold, and red streamers, ribbons, and/or pieces of cloth around the stage area as Cuckoo collects the seeds. If available, effective lighting may also play a part during this scene.

PROPS

- Clipboard with list and pencil (Búho)
- Torch (Fuego) – painted cardboard or heavy construction paper
- Colored streamers/ribbons/cloth to represent the fire
- Seeds (for The Cuckoo to give to Conejo and Topo)
- Baskets (optional - to collect the seed)

3. TELL ME WHO? (Búho, Birds, Cuckoo)

Words and Music by
SALLY K. ALBRECHT
and **JAY ALTHOUSE**

With a rhythmic pulse (♩ = ca. 112)

BÚHO (OWL)

BIRDS

With a rhythmic pulse (♩ = ca. 112)

PIANO

D

f

4

f 5

Tell me who _____ will help us through?

A

7

SOLO 1 SOLO 2

Tell me who _____ will get this

f

I will. I will, too.

D

NOTE: Different soloists/groups may be selected for each verse.

4. HURRY, HURRY!

(Birds)

Words and Music by
SALLY K. ALBRECHT
and JAY ALTHOUSE

Fast and furious, like the wind (♩ = ca. 116)

5

mf

BIRDS

Hur - ry, hur - ry, hur - ry, hur - ry,

PIANO

Gm

D7

mf

7

dar - se pri - sa.* Who is that, qui - én es e - lla, in the fi - re's din?

Gm D7 Gm Cm⁶ Gm/D Dsus D7 Gm

13

Hur - ry, hur - ry, hur - ry, hur - ry, dar - se pri - sa. Vue - le co - mo el vi - en - to.

D7 Gm D7 Gm Cm⁶

* PRONUNCIATION: Dahr-seh pree-sah. (*Hurry up.*)
Kee-ehn ehs eh-yah? (*Who is she?*)
Vweh-leh koh-moh ehl vee-ehn-toh. (*Fly like the wind.*)