

Teaching notes: *Fancies* by John Rutter

'There is a garden in her face'

CD recording: *Fancies* – John Rutter, Collegium COLCD117, track 2

Thomas Champion (1567–1620) English composer and poet, known for his provision of music for the lavish court masques of James I, his elegant and distinctive melodic writing and the fine matching of text and music.

John Rutter (1945–) Popular English composer of sacred choral music, known for formation of the Cambridge Singers and co-editing of *Carols for Choirs*. Composer of *Requiem*, *Gloria* and numerous anthems.

UNIT LINK

- Many choir members/vocal performers will have sung Rutter's material.

Discussion: It is not unusual to find composers setting words from a different historical period or alternative cultural context.

1. The poem describes the face of a woman, using the language and imagery of fruit and flowers growing in a garden. In this way, not only are her physical attributes described but also her inner qualities, revealing her spirit and personality.

Each verse moves in its meaning from the assertive descriptive imagery of the observer to an unequivocal statement that the lips are the domain of the woman herself. There is an acceptance that neither money, position nor power can 'buy' access to the lips of this woman.

Layout

Encourage students to make the obvious overview observations first and then move on to detail.

- Three six line verses or stanzas.
 - Within each group the indent of lines 2 and 4 and the alternate rhyming of the last word indicates pairing of lines 1 and 2, 3 and 4.
 - Lines 5 and 6 rhyme directly with one another.
 - Line 6 is common to all three verses. This has clear musical implications, on a simple level, the idea of repetition.
2. It is difficult to 'hear' so many things at one time, and this exercise provides the opportunity to train students to be disciplined in the way they listen.

Encourage a 'first hearing', writing nothing down.

Underline the words/parts of words which receive emphasis

Then choose whether to focus on what the instruments do, or how the voices are used.

Encourage graphic representations of initial musical observations, as well as verbal description, in preference to more precise analysis which can follow later if desired.

The following represents possible observations although it is not by any means exhaustive.

'There is a garden in her face'

Fairly substantial instrumental introduction (10+bars, ¾ time); sustained sound, horn; gentle solo woodwind shapes – clarinet/flute/oboe; ascending/descending motifs; pastoral quality – harp, sense of stillness as well as movement – timeless; interweaving, polyphonic.

	<i>held, woodwind motifs from intro. decorate</i>	
There is a g arden in her f ace,		<i>male voices, unison</i>
	<i>similar treatment to line 1</i>	
Where r oses and white l ilies g row;		<i>an interesting rhythmical 'hiccup'</i>
	<i>ditto</i>	
A h eav'nly p aradise is that p lace,		<i>playing with 2 and 3 time</i>
Where i n all pleasant f ruits do f low.		<i>word painting of the line moving towards 'flow'</i>
There ch erries grow which non may b uy,		<i>plus female voices, still unison, more emphatic</i>
	<i>special treatment: repetition</i>	
Till ' C herry-ripe' themselves do cry.		<i>impact of use of harmony on 'cherry-ripe', male and female voices/sudden return to unison/modal feel pizz string bass underpinning texture/dim. Into...</i>

link from 'cry' with woodwind motifs based on opening into shorter instrumental interlude/link (3+ bars)

Those cherries fairly do enclose		<i>unaccompanied harmony – all voices</i>
Of orient pearl a double row,		<i>suspended harmony</i>
	<i>melisma</i>	
Which when her l ovely laughter shows,		<i>plus simple flute</i>
	<i>comes to a pause</i>	
They look like rosebuds filled with s now.		
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy,		<i>voices and instruments unison or doubled at 8ve – emphasis. Harmony on 'buy'</i>
	<i>special treatment: repetition plus violin obbligato</i>	
Till 'Cherry-ripe' themselves do cry.		<i>more complex 'cherry' echoes, pizz bass simpler, less rhythmic</i>

barely 2 bars instrumental between 'cry' and 'Her eyes', but still based on previous interlude material

Her eyes like angels watch them still:		<i>use of unison/doubled male and female voices, sustained instruments</i>
Her brows like bended bows do stand,		
T hreatening with p iercing f rowns to k ill		<i>significant change of mood – darker – to match meaning of words; modal emphasis of doubled</i>
All that attempt with eye or hand		<i>this line flows straight into the next, pushing the pace towards the return of 'cherry ripe'</i>
Those sacred cherries to come nigh,		<i>instrumental/vocal doubling until 'nigh'</i>
Till 'Cherry-ripe' themselves do cry.		<i>treatment of 'cherry-ripe' as in verse 1. Ending with the harmonically unresolved statement of unison voices on last three words</i>

(Thomas Campion, 1567–1620)

3. Summary of composing ideas gained from analysis:

- Using voices in unison
- Different combinations of male/female
- Mainly step-wise descending/ascending motivic ideas.
- Usefulness of analysis of words to identify potential for special treatment
- Potential for instrumental interludes/decoration at the ends of phrases
- Repetition of words
- Contrasting accompanied with a cappella
- Use of changing time signatures