

The Orchestra at Work

For 1st-4th grades



Lesson 3 — *My Country 'Tis of Thee*

Objective

Students will be able to sing the American patriotic song *My Country 'Tis of Thee* and understand its basic meaning and historical origin. Students will demonstrate a steady beat through their voice and body movement.

Suggested Materials

- Music and lyrics for *My Country 'Tis of Thee* (provided)
- Recording of *My Country 'Tis of Thee* (audio links can be found at [youtube.com/user/BfloPhilharmonic](https://www.youtube.com/user/BfloPhilharmonic))
- Optional: Recording of and *God Save the Queen* (audio links can be found at [youtube.com/user/BfloPhilharmonic](https://www.youtube.com/user/BfloPhilharmonic))

New York State Arts Standards

MU:Pr6.1.1b	MU:Pr6.1.2b	MU:Pr6.1.3b	MU:Pr6.1.4b
MU:Re7.1.1a	MU:Re7.1.2a	MU:Re7.1.3a	MU:Re7.1.4a
MU:Cn10.1.1b	MU:Cn10.1.2b	MU:Cn10.1.3b	MU:Cn10.1.4b

New York State Social Studies Standards

1 – History of the United States and New York

New York State English Language Arts & Literacy Standards

Reading, Standard 2 & 4

Speaking & Listening, Standard 1, 2 & 3

Language, Standard 1 & 5

Procedure

- 1) Begin the lesson by singing the first verse of *My Country 'Tis of Thee* for the students, and ask them to sing along with you.

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From ev'ry mountainside
Let freedom ring!

- 2) After singing through the first verse, ask a few discussion questions: What do you imagine this song might be about? How does this song make you feel? Looking at the lyrics, how do you imagine the author feels about our country?
- 3) In what settings might you hear this song performed? What is its purpose? *My Country, 'Tis of Thee* is a patriotic song that served as the unofficial anthem of the United States until we adopted an official anthem in 1931. Ask students if they know what the official national anthem of the United States is.
- 4) Once students have become familiar with the song, let them know that the melody is actually borrowed from the song 'God Save the Queen' which is the patriotic national anthem from Great Britain. Play a recording of both for students and ask them to compare (see audio links).
- 5) Ask students to try the conducting pattern in three that they learned in Lesson 2. Point out that this song is in triple meter and ask students to try and conduct the beat while singing the first verse once again. You could also split the group and have half conduct while the other half sings. Be sure to have the groups switch places.
- 5) Play *My Country 'Tis of Thee* for students on the piano and ask them to sing along. Students will sing the first verse only at the BPO concert.

My Country, 'Tis of Thee piano score

The image displays a piano score for the hymn "My Country, 'Tis of Thee". The score is written in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment is primarily chordal, with some melodic lines in the right hand. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line.

My coun - try 'tis of thee, Sweet land of lib - er - ty, Of thee I sing.

Land where my fa - thers died! Land of the Pil - grim's pride! From ev - ry

moun - tain side, Let free - dom ring!