

TTBB A CAPPELLA

ED. 5567 \$1.00

# RIO GRANDE

---

Correlated with SUCCESSFUL SIGHT ♦ SINGING, Milestone 5

---

JAMAICAN FOLK SONG ♦♦♦ arr. OLIVE LEWIN

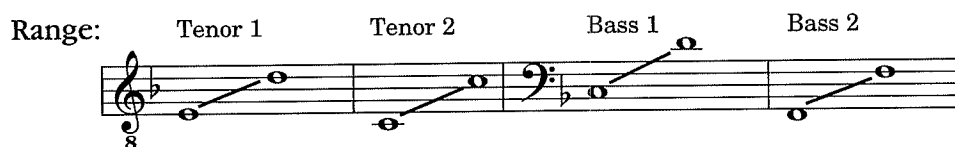
---

SUCCESSFUL SIGHT ♦ SINGING PERFORMANCE SELECTIONS



**Kjos** Neil A. Kjos Music Company ♦ Publisher

## ◆ RIO GRANDE



### ABOUT THE ARRANGER

After Jamaica gained independence in 1962, people became more interested in their heritage. Olive Lewin is a Jamaican ethnomusicologist who has collected, transcribed, classified and catalogued Jamaican folksongs. She has studied piano, violin, composition and voice. Dr. Lewin started the Jamaican Folksingers in 1967 and has arranged many folksongs for this choir. They have toured in England, the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Germany and Argentina.

### A SIGN OF THE TIMES

Shortly after Christopher Columbus arrived in Jamaica in 1494, the Spanish brought people from Africa to work as slaves. Slavery continued with the British until the nineteenth century. Today more than 90% of the Jamaican people are Afro-Jamaicans.

### THE LYRICS

The lyrics show that **Rio Grande** is a work song. Workers sang songs to communicate and to make their work less tedious as they rafted their cargo down the river.

*buck pan* = bucked upon = bumped against  
*an' de raf' tun ova* = and the raft turned over  
*rackstone* = rockstone

The roots of this folksong come from the African *call and response* where one person would sing the opening phrase and the other singers would respond with the next phrase:

Call: *I was raftin' on the Rio Grande*

Response: *Oh hoh*

Call: *Oh, me an' me uncle Benjie*

Response: *Oh hoh*

Afro-Jamaicans have a tradition of maintaining a strong sense of community. The voices singing the *call* should sing exactly together to give the idea of a single leader. When the rest of the choir joins in for the *response*, listen carefully so that everyone sings, breathes and phrases in the same way.

Today there is still a traditional sense of community – of people helping one another on a daily basis – in rural Jamaica.

## THE MUSIC BETWEEN THE NOTES

Before there were proper roads, people would carry huge bundles on their heads down to the river and then transport the goods along the river on rafts.

The raft would be (and still is) moved by the pole as the people sing “oh hoh.” The poling movement is quite long and smooth. It takes time to place the pole in the river bottom before actually moving the raft forward. Then they have to lift the pole to find another spot in the river.

On the longer notes, there is a sense of making the sound move slowly forward against the friction of the water.

## INTRODUCTION FOR THE AUDIENCE

“**Rio Grande** is a Jamaican folksong arranged by Olive Lewin. It reminds us of the days when Afro-Jamaican slaves would transport cargo down the river on rafts. Rafts are now used chiefly for recreation.”

*When we sing songs of other cultures, we begin to experience the rich diversity of musical heritages around the world. I am thankful to Olive Lewin for sharing this arrangement and information with us.*

*Nancy Telfer*

Nancy Telfer



# Rio Grande

TTBB, a cappella

Jamaican Folksong  
arr. Olive Lewin

Slowly (♩ = 66)

**Tenor 1** *mf* Oh

**Tenor 2** *mf* Oh

**Bass 1** *f* I was raf - tin' on the Ri - o Gran - de, oh hoh.

**Bass 2** *f* Oh hoh oh hoh.

**Keyboard** (for rehearsal only) *f* *mf*

Slowly (♩ = 66)

Duration: ca. 1:35

Music © 1997 Olive Lewin; Text © 1997 Neil A. Kjos Music Company, Publisher, 4382 Jutland Drive, San Diego, California.  
International Copyright Secured • All rights Reserved • Printed in U.S.A.

Warning! The contents of this publication are protected by copyright law. To copy or reproduce them by any method is an infringement of the copyright law. Anyone who reproduces copyrighted matter is subject to substantial penalties and assessments for each infringement.

3

8

me an' me un - cle Ben - jie, oh hoh oh hoh oh

8

me an' me un - cle Ben - jie, oh hoh oh hoh oh

me an' me un - cle Ben - jie, oh hoh.

me an' me un - cle Ben - jie, oh hoh oh

3

8

me an' me un - cle Ben - jie, oh hoh.

8

me an' me un - cle Ben - jie, oh hoh oh

mp

mp

8

hoh.

mp

8

hoh.

mf

Buck - pan — on big rock stone an' de raf' tun o - va, oh. Oh hoh oh hoh oh

mf

hoh. an' de raf' tun o - va, oh. Oh hoh oh hoh oh

8

7

7

8

mp

6

Fine 9

hoh.

hoh.

hoh.

When you're raft - in' on the Ri - o Gran - de, oh

hoh.

Oh

Fine 9

*mf*

*f*

Oh don't go wid un - cle Ben - jie, oh hoh oh hoh oh

*mf*

*f*

Oh don't go wid un - cle Ben - jie, oh hoh oh hoh oh

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

hoh. Don't go wid un - cle Ben - jie, oh hoh. For him

*mf*

*f*

*mp*

hoh oh hoh. Don't go wid un - cle Ben - jie, oh hoh oh

*mf*

*f*

*mp*

13 *mp* *f* *D.C. al Fine*

8 hoh. Oh hoh oh hoh oh hoh.

8 *mp* *f*

hoh. Oh hoh oh hoh oh hoh.

Buck-pan\_\_ on big rock stone an' de raf' tun o-va, oh. Oh hoh oh hoh oh hoh.

*mf* *f*

hoh. an' de raf' tun o-va, oh. Oh hoh oh hoh oh hoh.

13 *D.C. al Fine*

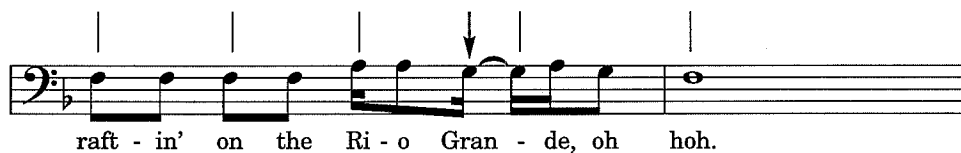
8 *f*

# Rehearsal Tips for the Conductor

## MAKING THE MUSIC COME ALIVE

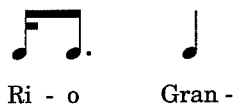
### Syncopated Rhythms

Sing the syncopated rhythms exactly between the beats:

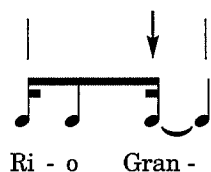


"Gran" comes right before the next beat.

To clarify the rhythm, the conductor can tap the beat while the entire choir sings "Rio Gran" placing "Gran" on the beat":



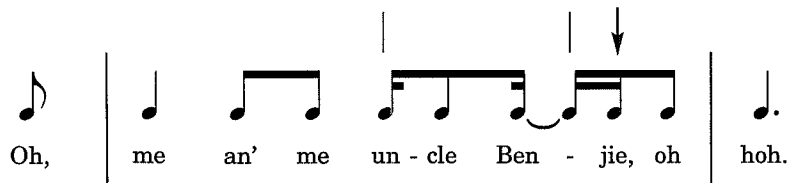
SING with "Gran" just before the beat:



REPEAT the two steps above singing "uncle Ben" in bar 4:



Then sing the full phrase placing "jie" right after the beat:



REPEAT.

SING the first phrase in rhythm.

### Pick-ups

Sing all pick-ups lightly:

