

Song for Grinding Acorns

Informant/Performer:
Josie Atwell
Lemoore, CA, 1959

Source:
Alfred Pietroforte
Yokuts and Paiute Songs and Culture
Happy Camp, Calif.:
Naturegraph Publishers, 2006

Rattle:

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 2/4. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff, the lyrics are aligned with the notes: "He we na wo le ya xorn he pa ra no wa ma _____ yen (yen.)". Above the staff, there are ten vertical tick marks corresponding to specific notes or rests. The first seven ticks are marked with an 'x', and the last three are marked with a double bar line symbol. A bracket above the final four measures indicates they should be repeated six times, with the instruction "(last time)" at the end.

Repeat 6 times (last time)

He we na wo le ya xorn he pa ra no wa ma _____ yen (yen.)

Background Information

This song is a work song. While the women ground and cured the acorn meal they sometimes amused themselves by singing this song. It was repeated as often as the work required. The informant is from the Wechihit tribe of central California. Paiute, Miwok, and many other tribes depended on acorns as a staple food.