

The Owl Sings

Source:
Paul Glass
*Songs and Stories of the
North American Indians*
New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1968

Slowly ♩ = 80

etc...

Oo oo Oo oo

Oo oo oo

etc...

The stars and the sha - dows dawn will come.

*The beat is kept on a basket with willow sticks.

Background Information

The story of Akwa'k the deer was told in song and dance, and had a special meaning for the Yuma Indians, who believed that the deer had some mysterious power to make other animals sing. It was told during the summer at the time of a full moon.

The singers were seated on three separate overturned baskets, four singers at each basket. A leading singer of each group struck the basket with two willow sticks, while the others struck it with the palm of their right hand.

It took a full night to tell the story. Every part of the night had a special song which described the deer's journey and the animals he met.

"Soon evening shadows entered the forest, and an owl joined the company. The deer asked the owl to sing, but the owl only hooted.

Then the deer asked again, 'Sing to us about what you know best.' The owl sang about the evening star and the shadows."