

Farewell to the Warriors

Informant/Performer:
Mrs. Charles Mee
White Earth Reservation, MN, 1908

Source:
John Bierhorst, ed.
A Cry From the Earth
Folkways FC 7777
Source: Archive of Folk Song 10, 522B4
(Wax Cylinder)

The musical notation is written on two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics 'um - be a - ni - ma - djag wa - su - gi di - zha - min' are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody, featuring a triplet of eighth notes. The lyrics 'Come, it's time for you to go on a long jour - ney,' are written below. The final staff continues the melody with more quarter and eighth notes, and the lyrics 'ya wi a ya wi a ya ya wi a ya wi a' are written below. The final staff concludes with a double bar line and the lyrics 'ya wee ah, ya wee ah, ya, ya wee ah, ya wee ah.'

um - be a - ni - ma - djag wa - su - gi di - zha - min
Come, it's time for you to go on a long jour - ney,
ya wi a ya wi a ya ya wi a ya wi a
ya wee ah, ya wee ah, ya, ya wee ah, ya wee ah.

umbe: come
animadjag: it is time for you to depart
wasugidizhamin: we are going on a long journey
ya wi a etc.: vocables

Background Information

The original field recording is included on the Smithsonian Folkways recording *A Cry from the Earth* (FW 37777) and can be listened to on <http://www.folkways.si.edu>.

Frances Densmore, the collector, included the song in *Chippewa Music* (Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 45, 1910), with the following notes:

“This is a very old song. The writer has talked with those who heard it sung long ago, when a war party left the little Chippewa village. It was the custom for the women to accompany the warriors a short distance, all singing this song; later the song would be heard again, faintly at first, then coming nearer as the women returned alone, singing still, but taking up the burden of loneliness which is women’s share in war.

“Analysis: only one other song in the present collection, no. 126 (catalogue no. 229) contains the interval of a whole tone between the seventh and eighth. This interval adds greatly to the effect of the song. The melody is of rare beauty, and is very graceful, despite the wide intervals at the beginning.” (163-164)

The American impressionist composer Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1884-1920) used the melody as the basis for one of his *Sketches for String Quartet Based on Indian Themes* (1914, published in 1922). More recently, the Canadian composer Régent Levasseur used the theme as the basis for a set of variations for violin and orchestra (2001).

Of the two renditions included on *A Cry From The Earth*, the second has the melody embroidered with an imitation flute-obbligato. This is one of two ways in which women singers imitate their lover's flute.