Lesson 4 – Oye

Objective
Students will learn the song Oye by James Papoulis and prepare to sing it together at the BPO concert. This piece includes lyrics that are in English and in Spanish giving students the opportunity to sing in another language. Students will learn about the inspiration for this song and examine the meaning behind the Spanish lyrics, encouraging cultural awareness.

Suggested Materials
- Lyrics and music for Oye (provided)
- Piano/vocal score (provided)
- Piano/vocal recording (audio link found at youtube.com/user/BfloPhilharmonic)
- Optional: classroom piano and/or audio system to play recording

New York State Arts Standards
1 – Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
3 - Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
4 – Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts

New York State Languages Other Than English Standards
1 – Communication Skills
2 – Cultural Understanding

Procedure
1) Introduce the song “Oye” with some background information about its origins:
The composer, Jim Papoulis, was working in Acapulco, Mexico with students from an inner city school. He works through The Foundation for Small Voices to conduct Songwriting Workshops for children worldwide, encouraging them to find their own voices, to write the lyrics that truly reflect their thoughts and hopes, and to be confident that they are heard. These experiences composing with children continue to be a great source of inspiration to him. The students helped Papoulis write the song, “Oye.” In the composer’s words:
“The children spoke little English but were easily reached through the music and rhythms I played; with the help of enthusiastic translators we connected further. When I asked them if they had a message that they would want to convey to the world in song, their answer was very simple: to listen. The translation of “listen,” or “listen up,” is “OYE.” This seemed like a wonderful, easy word to sing, and our “OYE” is a result of those experiences. When I hear this song performed, I am suddenly transported back to the streets where these children walk, go to school, live with little, and dream; they dream that somehow, somewhere, their small voices will be heard.”
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(continued)

2) Using the lyrics and music, score and recording as needed, teach the students the song, “Oye.” Depending on your available time, you may want to just focus on the English chorus with the Spanish lead-in (“Escuchalos, escuchalos, ellos te llaman”). If you have time, you can also teach them the first and second verse, which are both in Spanish. At the BPO concert, our singer will lead from the stage and students can sing as much as they are comfortable. Words will be available on the screen above the orchestra.

3) Share the translation with students and follow up with a discussion. Ask students what they think the Mexican children wanted to convey to people in other parts of the world by saying “Oye” or “Listen.” What do the students think this song is about?

Esta solo, llorando
En silencio, en la oscuridad
Esta sonando, deseando
Con esperanza, por la oportunidad.

All alone, in the darkness
They are crying out for your help
They are hoping, they are dreaming
They are asking, for a change to be heard.

Escuchalos, escuchalos, ellos te llaman.

Are you listening, can you hear their cries?

Escuchalos, miralos
Escucha lo que tartan de decir
Estan en busqueda, del camino
Pequenas voces llamandote.

They are watching, they are listening
They are searching to find their way
Can you see them, can you hear them calling
What their voices are trying to say.

Optional Lesson Extension
Ask students to brainstorm a word that they would like to communicate to the rest of the world. Assist students in writing lyrics for a class song that expresses this word. Would this song be fast, cheerful, slow, somber, etc.? “Oye” has the rhythmic and cultural sound of South American music – what style would your class song be? Assist students in writing and then performing at least a chorus. Be sure to title your song too.

Thank you to Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute for use of this piece from their Link Up Orchestra Sings program.
Oye

VERSE

Lively

Estasolollorandolos

Jim Papoulis

Escuchales

en silencio en las oscuridad

esuchaloque tratan de decir

esta sonandodo

deseando con esperanzas

del caminone pequeñas voces

llaman dote

___ Escuchales___ escuchales___

___ Escuchales___ escuchales___

elos tetlla-

___ elos tetlla-

CHORUS

Are you listening

Can you hear them calling

We are calling to you

Are you listening

Can you hear us?
O - ye  O - ye  O - ye
O - ye  O - ye  O - ye
O - ye  We are call - ing to you  O - ye
O - ye  O - ye  Can you hear us?
O - ye  Are you list - en - ing  O - ye can you hear them call - ling
We are call - ling to you  O - ye  Are you list - en - ing  O - ye can you hear them call - ling
Can you hear us?  O - ye!
Oye

Esta solo lloando en silencio
Escucha los milagros escucha

en la oscuridad
Lo que tratan de decir
Están en búsqueda del camino
con esperanza por la oportunidad
pequeñas voces llamando
Es cu cha los
Es cu cha los

es cu cha los el los te llama
es cu cha los el los te llama
Oye

Are you listening? Can you hear them calling?

We are calling to you.

Oye Are you listening? Can you hear them calling?

We are calling to you.
Can you hear us?

O - ye Can you hear us?
Oye

four times

four times

four times

O ye O ye O ye O ye O ye O ye

O ye O ye O ye O ye O ye O ye

O ye O ye O ye O ye O ye O ye
Oye

O - ye  O - ye  O - ye  We are calling to you
O - ye  O - ye  O - ye  We are calling to you

O - ye  O - ye  O - ye  We are calling to you
O - ye  O - ye  O - ye  We are calling to you
Oye

Can you hear us?

Are you listening?

Can you hear us?

Can you hear them calling?

We are calling to you.
O ye Are you listening? O ye can you hear them calling? Can you hear

O ye
O ye
O ye
Can you hear

us?

us?

O ye