

Riversong

Performance suggestion 1: start with parts 1 and 2 as a quiet background for 30-60 seconds. Add part 3, first sung through in unison and then as a round in up to ten parts. Part 3 fades to part of the background as part 4 begins, again sung through in unison and then as a round, in up to fifteen parts. To finish, fade out, with part 3 last of all.

To hand out parts, you can cut copies along the dotted lines and hand out to singers (and audience/passers-by!) If reading on a mobile phone, hold it sideways and you should be able to read your part without scrolling.

Parts 1 and 2 should be suitable for any singers. Part 3 requires some careful counting but should be fine for anyone who's sung rounds before. Part 4 should be led by some of the more experienced singers in the group. All parts can be sung by any voices, in whichever octave is most comfortable for them, and can be sung as rounds entering on any bar.

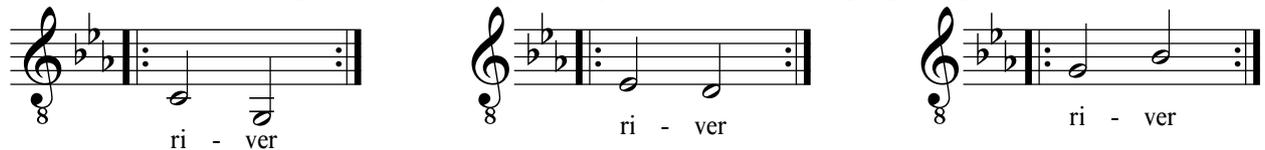
Speed is approximately $\text{minim}=60$: a low quiet drumbeat (e.g. on a bodhran) could be added to keep it steady.

You can substitute the names of your own rivers and river-creatures in parts 1-3 to make a new undersong.

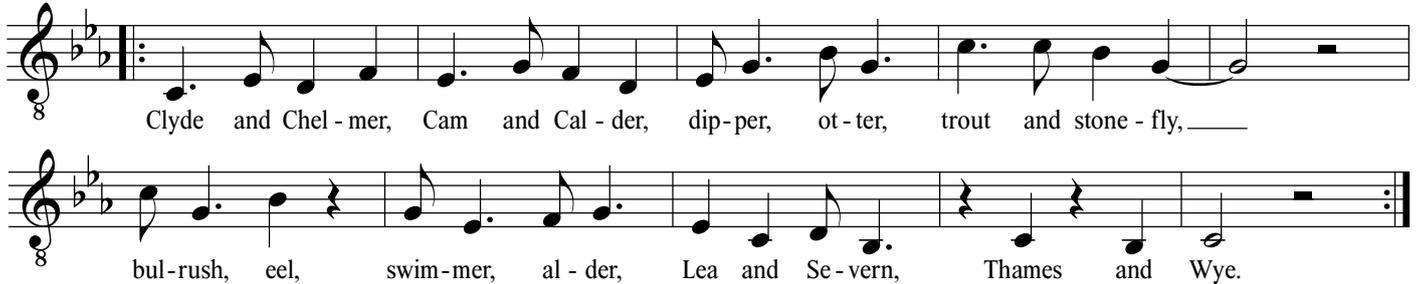
Part 1: sing as a quiet background throughout, in a round of up to five parts



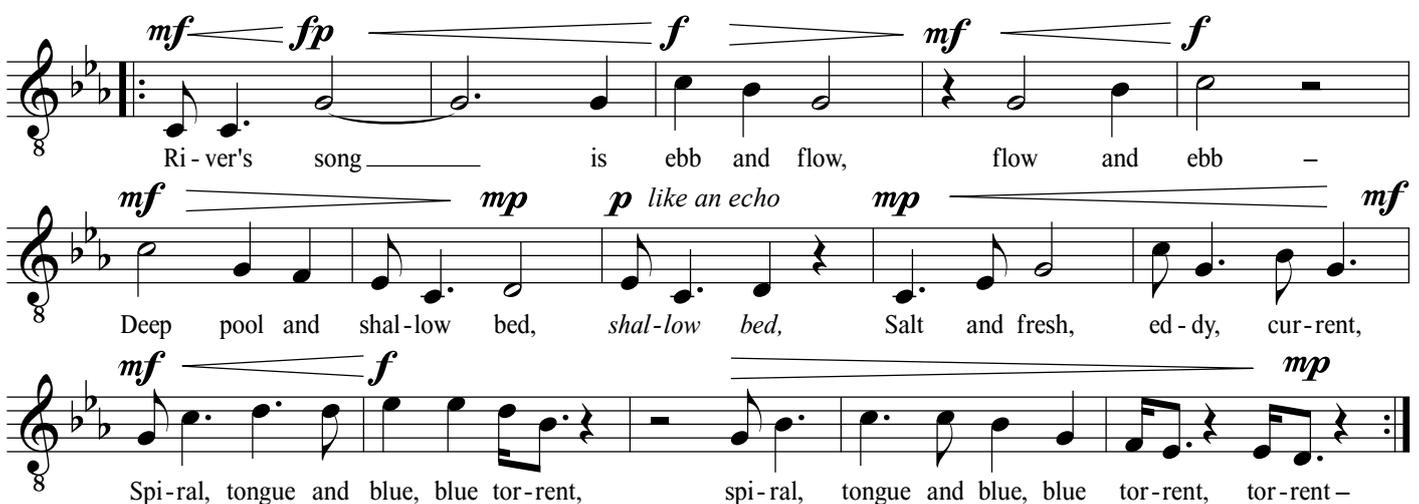
Part 2: choose whichever phrase is most comfortable for your voice and keep repeating it, or move between them



Part 3: sing together first time (or first few times), then as a round in up to ten parts. Fade to a quiet background when part 4 starts.



Part 4: sing together first time through (or first few times) and then as a round in up to fifteen parts



Performance suggestion 2 (for larger groups with a lot of confident singers): after adding all the parts from page 1 following the instructions there, part 5 is added (or replaces part 4), first in unison and then optionally as a round in up to ten parts. (By now you might have as many as 43 parts in total if all rounds are being done in full.)

Part 6 is spoken loudly (possibly with a megaphone or amplification) by a soloist or small group who could step forward from the choir. The rest of the singers (and drum, if using) quieten as they are drowned out by the spoken words, and all are silent by the line "*turned River's songs to elegies*".

After a brief silence, parts 1, 2 and 3 (and drum) re-enter gradually, building up; the soloist or small group should rejoin the main group. A few seconds later, part 7 begins (again, in unison the first time and then as a round); once the round starts, it should gradually accelerate to about *minim=75* (tempo led by the drum if one is being used), at which point part 8 comes in loudly with 3-part harmony, either with part 7 or replacing it. Part 8 can be another round (!) between multiple sub-groups, but each sub-group should have all 3 parts. It should repeat a few times.

To finish, the group(s) singing part 8 start singing their final phrase ("*River's song is the song of songs...*") as another round, which everyone who can eventually joins in with. When the end of the piece is signalled, all groups who have reached the last words "*stronger than stone*" sing them repeatedly (and speed up as they do) until everyone is singing "*stronger than stone, stronger than stone...*" together; once you've reached maximum volume, hold a final "*stone*" at full blast and then cut off.

Part 5: sing together first time through (or first few times) and then as a round in up to ten parts

p *mp*

Ri-ver ri-ses as spring and source, Ri-ver pools as lake and loch, lake and loch,

mf *f* *mf*

Ri-ver plun-ges as fall and force, fall and force, Ri-ver is the path that walks.

Part 6: spoken loudly & angrily by a soloist or small group, possibly with megaphone or amplification

But they gave the orders and turned the waters to sink and sump, stink and dump, from hill to sea;
Suits and boardrooms made ghosts of gods, turned River's songs to elegies.

Part 7: sing together first time through (or first few times) and then as a round in up to five parts, speeding up

mp *f*

Let sil-ver Ri-ver run quick and quick-er, far and near-er, once and e-ver, clean and clear-er,

Part 8: first time all together in harmony over part 7, then optional rounds between groups if you have enough singers

f throughout

So ga-ther the wa-ters, sons and daugh-ters, Braid the cur-rents and

weave the flows, Let Ri-ver shi-ver you from skin to bone - For

Sing this line repeatedly as the final round, with everyone moving to it eventually

Repeat to end

Riv-er's song _____ is the song of songs _____ and Ri-ver's will is strong-er than stone.