

Family Song

A full family chorus on the occasion of
Barbara Jean's 90th Birthday: November 3, 2012

A hotel worker enters with a large painted sign. She stops in the middle of the stage area, lifts the sign in the air, and reads "Family Song." She then exits. This part can also be played by a young great grandchild, if she would prefer. But either way, she should carry a big sign.

The family is gathered behind in a large half circle that covers the whole of the stage area — as many generations as possible. Even those who can't sing (babies) or those who aren't interested (a four year old who just wants to go to bed) should be there for they too are an important part of this story.

The whole family is THE CHORUS. One family member should conduct, from her position as part of the group. Parts of the CANTORS, RECITERS, and SINGERS should be assigned in advance to children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren (including of course those not related by blood).

Part 1: Ancestor Calling

- Chorus HHHmmmmmmmmmmmm.
(An explosive hum, that then fades and sustains over the next line.)
- Cantor 1 1598. Deacon Samuel Chapin came to America from England. Founded Springfield, MA in 1635. You can still see the statue.
- Chorus HHHmmmmmmmmmmmm.
(Another explosive hum that sustains over the next line.)
- Cantor 2 1607. Sir Jacob Barney. Born in Buckinghamshire, England. Moved to Salem with his wife Catesby. Shareholder of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- Chorus Hhmmm. HHHmmmmmmmmmmmm
(A double hum this time.)
- Cantor 3 Johnathon Scott. Cousin of Sir Walter Rowley Scott. Moved from England to Cedar Rapids and ran a pickle plant.
- Chorus HHHmmmmmmmmmmmm.

Cantor 4 1701. Jacob Sunderlin moves from Ireland to Rhode Island and begot Daniel who begot Joseph who begot Samuel who begot Floyd who begot Olive who begot Barbara.
(“Barbara Jean” and “Barbara Jean” sung as harmonies over the first held note.)

Chorus We came from England, Ireland, Scotland (*“and Whales!” chimed in*)
We came ‘cross the ocean on boats with many sails
We came as leaders and we came unseen
But one thing we know, we all came through Barbara Jean

Part 2: Forbearer Homage

The chorus continues a hum, or hopefully some kind of “du-wap” while each reciter steps forward and does his or her piece.

Reciter 1 There once was a dame Laura Barney
Who had many gifts literary
She wrote "Lyric of Life"
While a steadfast wife
And passed on her gifts to her children

Reciter 2 There once was a man named Floyd Sunderlin
Not one, but two papers ran under him
He was mayor Delmar
He was known from afar
When he spoke, his voice came a thundering!

Reciter 3 The once was a woman name Gertrude
A doctor and scholar, such aptitude
She invented the mix
To save time in a fix
Before Stove Top and Bisquik came through

Chorus We came from England, Ireland, Scotland (*“and Whales!” chimed in*)
We came ‘cross the ocean on boats with many sails
We came as leaders and we came unseen
But one thing we know, we all came through Barbara Jean

Part 3: Barbara Jean Story

The chorus now picks up its bums and du-waps, and chimes in a little this time. The speaker steps forward for his or her piece.

- Singer 1 Barbara Jean played the oboe in a band
Where she then met a nice young man
From Bohemia (*"From where?!" the chorus yells*)
Bohemia (*"Not there!" the chorus yells*)
This union would not be bested.
- Singer 2 Barbara Jean is a star in her own right
From tennis to church to bridge night
She (*"Mothers us all!" the chorus chimes in*)
She (*"Won't let us fall!" the chorus chimes in*)
For us she will put up a fight
- Singer 3 All our hopes and our dreams pass though this woman
All our hopes and our dreams she's fulfilling
All through her? (*"Just her!" the chorus chimes in*)
You mean her? (*"Yes sir!" the chorus chimes in*)
And we'll have many many more years, god willing
- Chorus We came from England, Ireland, Scotland (*"and Whales!" chimed in*)
We came 'cross the ocean on boats with many sails
We came as leaders and we came unseen
But one thing we know, we all came through Barbara Jean