

Notes from the composer:

Garbe Rame is based on a popular folk song from the Gujarat region of North West India. It depicts the goddess Amba (or Amba Mata) dancing with a gourd, or pot, in the Chachar Chok, or Chachar Square, of Ambaji, a town that is the home of the most famous shrine of Amba. Garbo is the Gujarati word for gourd, and also for the ritual circle dance, honoring Amba, that is traditionally performed by large groups of women on the nine nights of the annual Navaratri festival. The women carry perforated and illuminated pots (symbolizing the fertility of the goddess) on their heads, and clap, sing, bend, and turn together. These days, men may also take part in garba dancing.

An Indian folk singer would—as in many folk traditions—add grace notes and other embellishments, such as trills, to the melody. It is hard to achieve a lot of detailed decoration with a full choir. However, I recommend at least adding some glissandos in the melody and harmony lines between, for example, the syllables of “ambe” and “choke” in measures 19 and 21, and between the first two syllables of “Chacharna” in measures 19 and 20 (and similar places). Call to mind also the delicate and imaginative gestures of Indian dancing, and let the singing of the melody reflect its grace, subtlety, and charm.

In this arrangement, the folk melody is sung mostly by the 1st sopranos with a harmony line (moving in parallel with the melody) sung by the 2nd sopranos. The 2nd altos get a melody of their own in measures 15 through 18. The two alto parts mostly play the role of rhythm section—an essential feature of Indian folk music. Use the initial consonants to help add rhythmic clarity.

It is effective to add a light percussion accompaniment on drum, tambourine, or other hand-held percussion. I recommend something like simple ostinatos following the rhythm of the alto voices in measures 3 and 4 and/or measures 11 and 12, with a single “ting” from finger cymbals at the places where the melody comes in—first beat of measures 7, 19 and 27.

Garbe	rame	ambe	Chacharna	chokema
gár-be	rá-me	ám-be	tʃá-tʃar-na	tʃɔ-kə-ma
<i>“(Goddess) Amba dances in the Chachar square;</i>				
Chacharna	choke	madi	garbe	rame
tʃá-tʃar-na	tʃɔ-kə	má-di	gár-be	rá-me
<i>in the Chachar square, the (goddess) mother dances.”</i>				

Translation:

Garbo - a ritual dance performed traditionally by women during the goddess festival Navaratri.

Rame - literally “plays”, but here “dances”.

Ambe - the name of the goddess is “Amba” but here is used in a respectful form.

Chachar Chok - This is the name of the place where the dance is taking place. “Chok” means “square” and “Chachar” is the name of the place.

Madi - affectionate diminutive of Ma or “mother”.

Translation by Neelima Shukla-Bhatt

Garbe rame

Dancing With Gourds

SSAA with flute*

Traditional

Gujarati folksong
Arranged by **Sheena Phillips**
after **Peter Gritton**

♩ = ca. 66

playful and dancelike - never too heavy

Flute

mp leggiero

Soprano I, II

Alto I, II

3

mp poco marcato

Gar - be ra - me, gar - be ra - me,

Duration ca. 3:00

* Flute part is included on pages 10-11.

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gar - be ra - me, gar - be ra - me,

7

mp legato e leggiero

Gar - be ra - me am - be Cha - char - na cho - ke - ma, _____

gar - be ra - me, gar - be ra - me,

9

Cha - char - na cho - ke ma - di gar - be ra - me.

gar - be ra - me, gar - be ra - me,

11

p poco marcato

gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me,

13

gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me,

15

Soprano I, II

Alto I
mf non legato

gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me,

Alto II
mf legato

Gar - be ra - me am - be Cha - char - na cho - ke -

gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me,
 ma, Cha-char - na cho - ke - ma, gar - be ra - me,

Soprano I *mf warmly*
 Gar - be ra - me am - be Cha - char - na cho - ke - ma, _____

Soprano II *mf warmly*
 Gar - be ra - me am - be Cha - char - na cho - ke - ma, _____

Alto I
 gar - be ra - me, gar - be ra - me, _____

Alto II
 gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me, gar-be ra-me,