

Latin American Music

The Basics

SUBJECT AREA

Elementary General Music (3rd-5th Grade)

STANDARDS

MU.5.S.3.4

Sing and play melodies and accompaniments, by ear, using classroom instruments.

MU.4.C.1.3

Visually identify and classify instruments by family.

MU.4.H.1.1

Examine and describe a cultural tradition, other than one's own, learned through its musical style and/or use of authentic instruments.

MU.5.H.1.3

Compare stylistic and musical features in works originating from different cultures.

Author: Meghan Jones (2013)

The Lesson

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the population of immigrants from Latin American countries has increased in the United States. This influx of Spanish speaking immigrants along with the rise in the number of native-born Hispanic Americans is transforming the U.S. education system. The importance of improving ESOL education, as well as incorporating Hispanic culture in the educational process has increased. With its rich history, unique rhythms, and stylistic variety, Latin music is an effective tool for the teaching of many school subjects. The popularity of Latin music artists such as Shakira, Pitbull, Jennifer Lopez and Daddy Yankee attests to the interest and necessity of incorporating Latin music in schools. This lesson focuses on Latin folk and pop music, with an emphasis on the rhythms and instruments used in Puerto Rican and Mexican music. Integral Latin American musicians, such as Tito Puente and Carlos Santana, will be examined.

The lesson is divided into 3 sections explored over a period of 5 class periods. The first section introduces the music of Latin America, locating Latin American countries on the map. Students will learn about the culture of Puerto Rico and Mexico, specifically examining the mambo and mariachi musical form.

OBJECTIVES

- . Students will become familiar with the rich tradition of Latin American culture and music.
- . Students will be able to locate specific Latin American countries on a map.
- . Students will be able to play/sing selected rhythmic ostinati and melodies from traditional and popular Latin American songs.
- . Students will learn about important Latin artists.
- . Students will identify and classify Latin American instruments.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

<http://youtu.be/YG5BYAY6oW4>

Tito Puente's performance of "Oye Como Va" at the 'Festival Internacional de Jazz de Montreal' 1983.

<http://youtu.be/BM3-Sb14eT8>

Carlos Santana's performance of "Oye Como Va" from 'Live At Montreux' 2011.

<http://www.maxilyrics.com/tito-puente-oye-como-va-lyrics-91b7.html>

"Oye Como Va" Lyrics and Melody

<http://video.pbs.org/program/latin-music-usa/>

This is a PBS special presentation called "Latin Music USA" that delves into the artists and genres of Latin music in America.

Brown, Monica. *Tito Puente, Mambo King/Tito Puente, Rey del Mambo*. Illus. Rafael Lopez. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013. Print.

Sheehy, Daniel. *Mariachi Music in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. Print. "Cielito lindo" lyrics on page 29.

"Cielito lindo." Mariachi Los Amigos. 2001. CD.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

"Oye Como Va"-Tito Puente version

1. What instruments are used in the song?
2. What language is used?
3. Where might this song be played?
4. Where do you think the singers are from?

Carlos Santana version

1. How is this version different from Tito Puente's?
2. What is the most important instrument in this version as compared to Tito Puente's version?
3. How would you describe the style of the music?

"Cielito Lindo"

- 1) What do you think the song is about?
- 2) How does mariachi music make you feel?
- 3) Where would you expect to hear this type of music?
- 4) What does their style of dress tell you about Mexican culture?
- 5) What instruments do you hear in the song?

Tito Puente, Mambo King/Tito Puente, Rey del Mambo story reading

1. Why is Tito Puento called the mambo king?
2. What instruments did Tito's band play?
3. What are the mambo, rumba, and cha-cha?
4. Where is 'Spanish Harlem'?

Vocabulary:

mulata

guiro, timbales, bongo, conga

mambo, rumba, cha-cha

cielito

traje de charro

guitarron

refrain

PROCEDURES

DAY ONE

-“Oye Como Va”, (performed by Tito Puento) listening activity:

<http://youtu.be/YG5BYAY6oW4>

A) Divide the class into 3 groups. As students listen to the song, have each group focus on a discussion question:

Group 1) What instruments are used?, 2) Where may this song be played?, 3)and where the singers are from. Everyone: What language is being used? Discuss the questions in their group and as a class.

B) Introduce some of the instruments used in the song, (guiro, timbales, cowbell, bongo, and conga drums), by demonstrating how each is played and explaining the Spanish names' meaning when available.

-Introduce the concept of 'Latin music'. Ask the students what they think Latin music is. Show the first few minutes of PBS' "Latin Music USA". Discuss what they saw.

-Identify Latin American countries on a world map. Find Puerto Rico on the map. Present highlights of Puerto Rican culture, (food, dress, music), using PowerPoint. Discuss and show common instruments used in traditional Puerto Rican music.

-“Oye Como Va” performance activity Part 1-

A) Singing- Display the lyrics of the song on the ELMO. Discuss the meaning of the words, in particular 'mulata'. Practice saying the words and learn the melody by rote.

DAY TWO

-“Oye Como Va” performance activity Part 2

A) Review the song's melody, words, and meaning. Sing the song.

B) Instrumental Accompaniment-

-Orff instruments: learn the xylophone, glockenspiel, and recorder accompaniment. The essential chords of the song are D Major and A minor. Assign simplified accompaniment parts from song (using notes from DM and Am)

-Xylophones play selected notes from the chords separated by one octave using the phrase, "I love to dance mambo," to learn the rhythm. (ie: Bass xylophones play two D's for DM)

-Recorders play either melody or simplified accompaniment, (depending upon grade level).

*A more fanciful version of this accompaniment can be seen here.

<http://youtu.be/VJultquFyRY>

-Tito Puente, Mambo King/Tito Puente, Rey del Mambo story reading:

A) Rumba beat- Learn the rumba beat presented in the book using the words "Tum tic-a, Tac Tic, Tum Tic, Tom Tom". Practice on the body while saying the words. Transfer this pattern to hand drums using high and low tones as notated in the book.

B) Select students to briefly practice playing the instruments in the story, such as the clave and tambourine.

B) Read the story as a class, playing the rumba beat and selected instruments when cued in the story.

C) Answer discussion questions in groups and then as a class.

DAY THREE

-Song Comparison Activity:

A) Play Carlos Santana's version of "Oye Como Va" <http://youtu.be/BM3-Sb14eT8>

Ask the students to consider the following discussion questions as they listen: 1. How is this version different from Tito Puente's? 2. What is the most important instrument in this version as compared to Tito Puente's version? 3. How would you describe the style of the music?

B) Place students into groups of 4 and compare and contrast Tito Puente and Santana's performance of the same song using the VAT Song Comparison Graphic Organizer. Have a group representative share one similarity and one difference.

-“Oye Como Va” performance activity Part 3

A) Review the vocal part.

B) Percussion instruments: select groups of students to play the guiro, cowbell, drums, and maracas. Practice the percussion parts of the song along with the singing.

C) Divide the students into 3 groups, (vocal, xylophones, and percussion instruments). Perform together, rotating until each group has had the opportunity to play/sing each part.

-Latin American Artist Project- Divide the students into groups of 4. The students are to choose a Latin American artist whom they enjoy and research how the artist has contributed to Latin American music. Provide some examples of artists that they may choose from. They are to research their selected artist in the computer lab.

DAY FOUR

-Introduction to traditional Mexican culture and music

A) Locate Mexico on the world map and show a brief PowerPoint presentation that highlights Mexican culture and music.

B) Play “Cielito lindo”, a popular example of Mariachi music. Show images of mariachi bands. In particular, display the traje de charro, (Mexican cowboy style suit), and the guitarron, (Mexican bass guitar).

C) Distribute small whiteboards and markers to the students. Answer discussion questions with their shoulder partner, writing key words on a small whiteboard. Share out and answer questions as a class: 1) What do you think the song is about? 2) How does mariachi music make you feel? 3) Where would you expect to hear this type of music? 4) What does their style of dress tell you about Mexican culture? 5) What instruments do you hear in the song?

D) Learn lyrics and melody of the refrain in “Cielito lindo”. Play the song again, as students sway to feel the $\frac{3}{4}$ meter of the song. Sing the refrain as it occurs in the song.

-Group Project- work with their group in writing down 5 interesting facts that they learned about their Latin American artist after their research. Also decide on a school appropriate song that the artist performs to share with the class during their presentation.

DAY FIVE

-Review and sing “Cielito lindo”.

- Latin American Artist Project presentations: Present group research and share a school appropriate song that the artist performs. Discuss why they choose the artist and song.

CLOSURE

Divide students into groups. Create a collage on poster board that compares and contrasts the culture and music of Puerto Rico and Mexico.

EVALUATION

-Playing the selected melodies and rhythms of the songs

-Group project on a Latin American artist

-Group collage

REFLECTION

Due to the vastness and complexity of Latin American music, it is impossible to cover in one unit’s time. Latin American music is a delicious spice that should be sprinkled throughout the school year, and not confined to one unit. Some musical topics that can be explored during the year include syncopation, the son, merengue, and other Latin dances. Latin music may also be used to teach topics within the subjects of history, geography, and sociology.