

Lesson Plan Music of Latin America and the Caribbean

By Sarah Whitaker, MM in Jazz Studies, Michigan State University College of Music with the [MSU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies](#)

Overview

The Importance of Global Music by Sarah Whitaker, MM, [presentation Youtube playlist](#)

Objective

Students will learn

- About music from Latin America and the Caribbean, its history and the cultures that influenced it.
- Music vocabulary and concepts.
- Experience playing instruments from the region

Michigan Standards for Arts Education Music K-8

Perform

Standard 1

Apply skills and knowledge to perform in the arts (VPAA: C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, P1, P2, P4, R1, R4)

Create

Standard 2

Apply skills and knowledge to create in the arts (VPAA: C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, P1, P2, P4, R1, R4)

Analyze

Standard 3

All students will analyze, describe and evaluate works of art (VPAA: C2, C3, C4, C5, P2, P3, R1, R2, R3, R4)

Standard 4

Understand, analyze, and describe the arts in their historical, social and cultural contexts (VPAA: C2, C3, C4, C5, P2, P3, R1, R2, R3, R4)

Analyze and Make Connections

Standard 5

Recognize, analyze and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; between the arts and everyday life

Michigan Competencies for Social and Emotional Learning

Self-Awareness

1A. Children/Students demonstrate an awareness of their emotions.

1B. Children/Students demonstrate awareness of their personal traits, including their strengths and interests.

Self-Management

2A. Children/Students identify and manage their emotions and behaviors constructively

Learning Strategies

Based on this [article](#)

Embrace the Artist Within by

Incorporate technology

- Use a photos of musicians from the region such as Celia Cruz, Selena, Mongo Santamaria, Astor Piazzolla,
- Play video clips of music of the region
 - Traditional and contemporary
 - Different genres
 - Showcase different instruments

Focus on engagement

- Ask:
 - What music students like?
 - Who is their favorite musician?

- Show photos of different instruments and ask which ones they know and don't know
- Allow for experimentation and improvisation
- Have a petting zoo of instruments from the region
- Have students make instruments - shakers
- Show videos of people playing instruments of the region
- Have students use software and electronic instruments to create music

Materials

Map

Video clips of different music

Photos of classic and contemporary artists

Instruments for a petting zoo

If making shakers

- Small paper cups, 3oz
- Beans
- Duct tape
- Markers for decorating

Introduction

Possible conversation starters:

- What is music?
 - Organized sound
 - Sounds that a person likes
 - Doesn't have to be human made
 - Anything can be music
 - Rain
 - Waves
 - Birds chirping
- What is your favorite music
- Who is your favorite musician
- What is your favorite instrument?
- With what instrument are we born?
- Music from Latin America and the Caribbean
- Music tells stories.
- Music is a method of self expression of an individual, group. Music can have characteristics of different cultural groups.
- Music as a strategy for processing emotions
- Is there music that helps you feel:
 - Calm

- Confident
- Energetic
- Or playing the music helps you feel
 - Calm
 - Less frustrated
 - Proud

[Video of teaching the intro and warm up in action](#)

Background

Hispanic Heritage Month September 15-October 15th because that reflects the dates when many countries of the region declared or achieved independence.

Hispanic Peoples are descendants of Spanish-speaking people who are from Spanish speaking countries.

Where are Spanish-speaking countries? Most are in Latin America which are located in North and South America and were colonized by Spain and Portugal.

Not every country in Latin America is Hispanic. For example, in Brazil, they speak Portuguese. Latin American and Caribbean culture is a mix of contributions from primarily indigenous peoples, West African peoples and Europeans. The Caribbean also has influences from people of India.

3 Main Cultural Influences

Indigenous

- Indigenous People's Month
- Indigenous people have lived in the Americas for thousands of years.
- There are many different people, cultures and languages
- Despite efforts by the colonizers to erase Indigenous people and culture, they are still here.
- Indigenous influence on music of the region
- Idiophones such as the maraca and guiro were made from natural materials and are an important part of the percussion section in music.
- Guiro - originally made from a fruit, usually a calabash. It has ridges that make a sound when scraped with a stick.
- Maracas - usually played in pairs. Also were made from fruit or plants. Seeds or rocks inside make music when shaken and hit the shell.
- Now are likely to be made of plastic, metal or wood and get different sounds.

[Guiro](#) example

[Maracas](#) example

[Example of shakers in traditional Native American music](#)

[Example of shakers in modern Latin American music](#)

Indigenous Influence Presentation [video of teaching the module](#)

African

- Most of the African influences found in the Americas came from Central and West Africa
 - Ghana
 - Senegal
 - Mozambique
 - Nigeria
 - Ivory Coast
- Yoruba and Bantu people's influences
- From the 1500s-1800s millions of people from Central and West Africa were enslaved and forcibly moved to the Americas.
 - See this [document](#) for a deeper dive into issues related to slavery and race in the region.
 - See this [list](#) for different resources related to slavery and the African Diaspora
- Many enslaved people relied on keeping their culture alive to survive.
- Their musical instruments are idiophones and examples include
 - Shekere
 - Cabasa
 - Claves
 - Caxixi
 - Ganza
 - Bongos
 - Balafon
- African rhythms are the foundation of Latin American music

[Ash Bongo demonstration of Traditional Cuban Son in the Septeto style](#)

[Soul in Motion Shekere performance](#)

[Cabasa Solo](#)

African Influence Presentation [video of teaching the module](#)

European

From the 1400s-1800s, European settlers embarked on a journey to the Americas where they encountered Indigenous peoples. Many colonizers enslaved, killed or tried to erase Indigenous peoples and their cultures.

European instruments such as stringed instruments or chordophones, the Tres and the Cuatro provide melody and harmony to Latin American music.

[Cuban Musicians playing the Tres Cubano](#)

[Fabiola Méndez Seis Chorreo](#) with the Puerto Rican Cuatro
European Influence Presentation [video of teaching the module](#)

Genres of the region

- Salsa - USA
- Merengue - Dominican Republic
- Tango - Argentina
- Mariachi - Mexico
- Bomba - Puerto Rico
- Plena - Puerto Rico
- [Samba](#) - Brazil
 - See this document about carnival for an overview of Samba
- Forro - Brazil

Activities

Petting Zoo

Petting Zoo Guidelines

- Music is something that has been enjoyed throughout human history.
- Need instruments for music and need to care for them.
- Show me how to pet a cat.
- Like being gentle with a cat, we'll be gentle with instruments

Make Shakers

- Everyone receives 2 paper cups
- Put about 20 beans in one cup
- Place second cup on top with the lips meeting in the middle
- Duct tape the cups together in the now middle of the shaker

Copy the rhythm you hear

- Students can play along with the music and/or the teacher plays and then the students plays the same rhythm back.

Move to the music

- Students can shake and dance to the music

Resources

[Michigan K-12 Competencies related to music](#)

[Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors: Why We Need Diverse Repertoire in our Music Classrooms](#)

[Mirrors and windows: Reflecting and expanding worldviews in music education](#)

[Smithsonian World Music Pedagogy Course Resources](#)

[Multicultural Music Education Curriculum](#)

[Columbia University Music Education and Resources](#)

[Teaching Music/Teaching Culture: From the Rhetorical to the Realities](#)

[Intersectional Identities: Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy Through the Lens of Chinese American Music Education](#)

[International K-12 Music Education and Curriculum Reform in the United States: A Case Study of Music in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme](#)

[Including the Music of Your Students in Your Curriculum](#)

[What are Dynamics in music?](#)

[Types of Tempo in Music](#)

[Tempo in Music](#)

Music Vocabulary

Music is a human made art based on sound

Idiophones are instruments that are scraped, struck or rattled. Percussion instruments are examples of idiophones. Indigenous and African instruments provide rhythm.

Chordophones are instruments that use strings and provide melody and harmony.

Melody is the main theme of the song

It's the fingerprint, unique identifier of a song

Red and blue paint are the elements

In a monotone say the words to happy birthday and ask students what's different?

Sing happy birthday in English

Sing happy birthday in Spanish or French - same melody that we recognize but different words.

Harmony is two or more notes played or sung at the same time.
How red and blue paint interact ie make purple is harmony

Rhythm is a constant beat or groove that we base the melody and harmony on.
Heartbeat is rhythm of body

Musicians are people who make music

Vocalists are musicians who use their voice as their instrument.

Instrumentalists are musicians who use an external instrument to participate in music.

Tempo - the speed or pace of the piece, how fast or slow the beats should be

Larghissimo - extremely slow

Largo/Lento -Slowly

Grave - slow and solemn

Adagio = Slow, relaxed

Andante = walking pace

Moderato = Moderate speed

Allegro = Fast

Presto = Very fast

Prestissimo = Very, very fast

Minor key - notes arranged to create a more sad, serious or somber sound

Major key - notes arranged to create more happy and cheerful sounds

Treble (clef) - high-frequency sounds

Bass (clef) - lower, deeper sounds

Staff - 5 parallel lines which represent different musical pitches. Notes and other symbols are placed on the lines or in spaces to indicate pitch and rhythm..

Pitch - how high or low a sound is

Notes - symbols representing how high or low a sound is

Quarter note - played for 1 beat

Eighth note - played for half a beat

Sixteenth note - played for a quarter of a beat

Half note - played for 2 beats

Whole note - played for 4 beats

Staccato - musical instruction to play a note with a crisp or bounce sound to create separation between notes rather than a smooth connection of notes

Rest - symbol indicates a period of silence where no notes are played

Octave - A series of 8 notes

Dynamics - how loud or soft music is played.

Forte = Loud

Mezzo forte = A little loud

Fortissimo = Very loud

Fortississimo = Very, very loud

Piano = soft

Mezzo piano = A little soft

Pianissimo = Very soft

Pianississimo = Very, very soft

Crescendo = gradually getting louder

Decrescendo = gradually getting softer

Sforzando = suddenly, with a sudden emphasis