The World at Your Fingertips
Exploring Multicultural Styles through Beginning Composition and Improvisation at the Piano

The Collegiate Chapter of MTNA
at the University of South Carolina

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Pre-Staff Composition Utilizing Multicultural Styles

Benefits
- Students can explore more complex sounds and textures at an earlier age
- Students can focus less on the complex note reading and more on the quality of sound they are creating
- Students can participate in the composition process very early in their piano study
- Pre-staff composition aids the young student’s transition from concrete thinking to basic abstract thinking

Facts: Eastern Europe
- Music varies widely per country
- Folk songs are rhythmically and melodically rich
- Utilizes a variety of modes

Facts: Japan
- Irregular meter
- Combination of unique pentatonic scales
- Many songs in a melancholy mood

Facts: South Korea
- Combination of folk, vocal, ritual and religious styles
- Lyric sensibility
- Use of a set rhythm called Jangdan

Improvisation Utilizing Multicultural Rhythms

Benefits
- Helps students learn to keep a steady pulse
- Prepares students to play more complex rhythms in the future
- Allows students to experience more complex topics within a context in which they will be successful
- Helps to foster the student’s creativity, as well as a desire to try new things without fear of failure

Four Basic Steps
- Rhythmic call and response with verbalization
- Call and response within a five-finger pattern
- Student improvisation using the samba rhythm over a basic teacher pulse
- Student improvisation using the samba rhythm over a stylistic teacher accompaniment
Facts: South America
- Indigenous traditions
- European influence
- African influence
- Syncopated dance rhythms

Facts: Africa
- Music expresses life through sounds
- Accompanies important events
- Has a specific place and purpose
- Emphasis on rhythm rather than melody

Eastern Europe - Ukrainian Dorian Modal Scale

Japan – Miyako-bushi/ Minyo Scale for Beginning Students

South Korea – Anhemitonic Pentatonic Scale

South America - Latin “Samba” Rhythm

Africa - “Standard Bell Pattern” Rhythm