

Using Repertoire to Incorporate World Music

Bringing world music into private lessons

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Importance of World Music Exposure

- Give students a wider understanding of the world and people within it
- Pre-college: Less music and arts time in schools
 - Helps address national standards for music ed
 - Can prepare students for college classes
- Everyone: Better understanding of the music
 - More accurate and authentic performance

Getting started: Do some research

- Choose great music that you want the students to learn anyway
 - Don't limit yourself to folk song arrangements
- Find short bursts of information
 - Videos, pictures
 - Visual necessary for younger learners
- Make connections to other things in the world
 - Dance, fashion, religion, celebrations
- Be clear about the word/style/idea within its cultural context
 - One word can mean different things in different countries

Be realistic!

- Practical = actually do it
- Think about your time
- Incorporate video whenever possible
 - Faster and more clear than spoken explanation
- Start with a few specific pieces that you already teach

Think about the country or culture

- Where is the composer from? Where is it on the globe?
- What type of climate does it have?
- What important things is the country or culture known for? Certain foods, ideas, products?
- Is there a famous tourist place in the area that you can show?
- Find pictures to give students an idea of the location
- **Translate the title and any markings/instructions

Think about the local music

- What are the general musical characteristics of the country?
 - Instruments, dance types, performance situations
- Find videos of local instruments and dances
- If the repertoire is based on a specific dance, try to find it

Think about the composer

- Where was the composer born within the country?
 - City or rural area?
 - Known for the arts or far from them?
- When was the composer born?
- What was going on in his or her world at the time?
 - War? Cultural events?

Make connections between the repertoire and the world

- Connect repertoire and information you found
 - Mimicking local instruments? How can the student bring out those sounds?
 - Dance basis? How is the dance used?
 - Rhythm? Gesture? Extra-musical noises
 - Performance situation? How to show the original context?

Specific example: Ernesto Lecuona's "La Comparsa"

- Ernesto Lecuona's "La Comparsa" from his *Danzas afro-cubanas*
 - Fairly well-known, fun and challenging for upper intermediate players
 - Worth learning for musical and technical benefits
 - Great as a set for mature performers
- I'll walk through how I would research the piece

The country

- Lecuona was from Cuba
 - Warm, tropical, vibrant colors, lush
 - Jungle, beach and city
 - Was a Spanish colony, many African slaves imported to the island
 - Long history, beautiful old architecture
- Translate title: La comparsa
 - La comparsa: the parade (or parade group)
 - In Cuba: a group of people who march together in the Carnival parades
 - specific neighborhoods or social groups
 - Costumes and choreographed dances
 - Some have a long history

The local music

- Traditional instruments: many drums and other percussion instruments
 - African roots
 - Also common: guitar, winds and voice
- Traditional types of music: many dances
 - Clave: basic rhythmic pattern that repeats
 - Polyrhythm: multiple rhythmic lines at once
- 'Warm' sound to melodies
 - In US, often associated with vacation (movies)

The composer and the time

- Lecuona lived from 1895-1963

- Afrocubanismo movement
 - Cuba starting to embrace African roots
 - Focus especially on African rhythm
- Lecuona combined African rhythms, classical forms and modernist innovations

Connect the repertoire and the world

Opening line—tambor

- Play LH in 'imitation of tambor (small drum)'
- Also : il basso sempre marcato
- Remind students dance-like rhythm continues throughout
- Comparsa idea through volume
 - ppp through ff back to pp
 - Starts ppp marked 'from far away'
 - Middle section builds to both hand in octaves
 - Feelings of joyful celebration grow to climax of piece, then recede
 - Have students picture the parade; think of how sound changed as people moved

Resources

- many websites have videos and lesson plans you can use when you're starting out or looking at something new
- World Music Network: <https://www.worldmusic.net>
- World Music Central.org: <https://worldmusiccentral.org>
- Smithsonian Folkways: <https://folkways.si.edu/lesson-plans/smithsonian>
- The World Music Library: <http://theworldmusiclibrary.com/portfolios>
- The Kennedy Center ArtsEdge: <https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/themes/arts-resources-world-music>

Summary

- incorporating world music into repertoire is beneficial and do-able
- takes some time for research, but very little lesson time
- technology like phones or iPad makes finding and showing pictures/videos easy
- make students more informed performers and people

Contact me with any questions: anmille1@wsc.edu