

Folk Games

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Course: General Music

Standards Met: #1 Understanding the Arts, #3 Communicating with the Arts

Scope of Curricular Package: Two class periods, Students may need up to four days

Introduction: Having students sing/perform folk songs from the slavery period is one way to help them understand some of the feelings that resulted from this institution. Through songs, the slave told his true feelings about slavery. The students will learn melodies, chants, and body percussion for two folk games.

Day One

Objective: To learn a song-game from the slavery period

Concept: Music History, Rhythm, Melody

Materials: Handouts of text, Overhead projector, Overhead transparency of "Hambone," CD/audio cassette of Gullah games/chants, book of Gullah poems

Vocabulary: Gullah, Hambone, Body percussion

Procedure:

- 1. Do Now (Bellwork), Students will copy vocabulary words into their personal music folders, handouts will be issued at this time.**
- 2. Allow students time to complete bellwork**
- 3. Read poem "De Cunjah Man"**
- 4. Explain to students how and why this language came into existence.**
- 5. Introduce the idea of songs as a way of expressing human feelings. Ask students to name a song that makes them feel happy or sad. Have students talk about how songs invoke their emotions and about what information they can learn from songs.**
- 6. Explain that songs and music played a very important role in the lives of slaves in the United States. What might they expect the songs to be about?**
- 7. Play recording of a folk game. Have students explain what they think the text is actually about.**
- 8. Introduce the words to "Hambone" by overhead transparency.**
- 9. Teacher explains that this poem is recited with a specific rhythm**

10. Teach students to read the poem with the correct rhythmic inflection.
11. Discuss meaning of the words to “Hambone”
12. Demonstrate the body percussion that goes with “Hambone”
13. Ask for volunteers to try to echo teacher.
14. Have students get into four groups to practice (10 min.)
15. Students will take turns (in groups) performing “Hambone”
16. Close

Assessment: Students understand how folk /slave songs were used by slaves to express their true feelings. Students will be able to perform basic body percussion to accompany a song/chant.

Day Two /Three (The first lesson may need more than one class time/period)

Objective: To learn a folk song/chant from slavery period, and to review a piece from a previous lesson.

Concept: Music History, Rhythm, Melody

Materials: Same as day one.

Vocabulary: Juba, body percussion, syncopation

Procedure:

1. Do Now – Assignment on chalkboard (Open your music folders to “Hambone,” Get into your group and review this piece. (10 min.)
2. Ask the class whether anyone knows what the word Juba means.
3. Give the students this background about Juba:
4. Juba is one of the oldest plays that has come to us from Africa. The word “juba” is probably a variation of one of the West African day names. In the United States the original African meaning has long since been forgotten. However, occasional mention of “juba” may be found in songs generally associated with hand-clapping. Juba may be played alone or with a group.
5. Distribute hand-outs of the game Juba , ask volunteers to read aloud
6. Teacher demonstrates how to read Juba using the traditional rhythms – Teacher may need to repeat this more than once.
7. Teacher will teach Juba to the class - body percussion (hand-clapping)
8. Students will return to designated groups for practice. Teacher may select a leader for each group (a student who appears to be
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able to perform Juba). Teacher may also give each group a separate section of Juba and have each group perform at

appropriate times. After each group has performed it's section, students can be rotated into other groups to learn the other parts.

9. Students may be challenged by groups to see which group can sustain the chant and hand-clapping the longest before errors occur. Stop-watch or watch with second hand may be used to time competition.

10. Close

Assessment: Students will know the historical background to a well-known game that originated in Africa. Students will be able to chant and pat/clap the rhythm of Juba with 60-70% accuracy.

Extension: 1. Each student will write a brief essay about a song that has a very important meaning for them. 2. Students may make up other rhythm patterns to Juba and play them on classroom instruments. 3. "Hambone" and "Juba" may be performed for other classes; Performers will receive points that will enhance their music grade. Some students may be allowed to use authentic African instruments for the performance.

Bibliography:

1. **Africa – The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music** vol. I, Garland Publishing, Inc., NY & London, 1998
2. **Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands** by Lydia Parrish, Creative Age Press, Inc., New York, 1942
3. **A Teacher's guide to the Gullah Language** by Virginia M. Geraty
4. **Ain't You Got Right to the Tree of Life** by Guy and Candie Carawan, The University of Georgia Press, Athens, Georgia 1989
5. **African-American Poetry, an Anthology, 1773-1927**, edited by Joan R. Sherman, Dover Publications, Inc, Mineola, New York
6. **The Gullah** by Joseph A. Opala, U.S. Information Service, 1987
7. **Been in the Storm too Long**, Smithsonian Folkways, Smithsonian Institute (through the Avery Institute
8. Powerpoint Presentation, Great Migration Group, Sponsored by Kenyon College, Ohio