



ORCHESTRA

Native American Standard in the Public School General Music Classroom

by Cristina Seaborn

I have done a lot of work with the Native American standard in the public school general music classroom. Some ways I have incorporated the Native American standard are:

- collecting YouTube Native song and dance videos
- teaching songs
- teaching about the Native tribes particularly in Minnesota
- having a powwow dance at the school
- honoring the students who are Native who can lead the powwow
- asking the Native elders in my community to speak to my students about their story, asking for their perspective on how to best inform the students
- inviting a Native guest artist for a residency

Uniquely creating a lesson for your classroom is the answer. No two Native guests will give the same answer. This is not

a lesson plan you can write down in a book and have published. It is a living lesson.

I co-presented with Nyssa Brown the attached lesson on the “Jingle Dress Dancer” at the Perpich Center for the Arts, with Liz Jaakola also presenting that day. All workshops focused on the Minnesota Native standard. This was well attended as most teachers struggle to meet this standard.

Liz Jaakola and I wrote a piece for orchestra that used the piano as a drum so as not to insult the Native tradition. Hitting the piano with a soft cotton mallet was the solution Liz came up with. An ideal solution is to invite Native men to play the mother drum.

The men play the drum because the drum represents mother earth. Women can bear children, so they are already connected to mother earth. Men need this connection. Keeping the beat on the drum helps men feel connected.

Liz Jaakola had a dream to start a women’s drumming group, which is a radi-

cal idea. She did create the women’s drum group, though to have less controversy, the women use small handheld drums rather than the large mother earth drum.

Attending a powwow and participating in the dance, which all are welcome to do, will help us become familiar with the Native tradition in Minnesota.

The clothing is called “regalia” and not a costume. Not understanding the meaning of the drum, feather, chants is disrespectful. The standard is to teach all of us the deeper meanings of the Minnesota Native culture.

Cristina Seaborn has produced an instructional video for fiddling through Mel Bay entitled Anyone Can Play Country Fiddle, CDs entitled Inside the Heart of a Musician, Seaborn Breeze, and Spirit Wind, and many arrangements for string orchestra of fiddle music, jazz, Celtic, Scandinavian, Cajun, and original. Cristina is a violinist and fiddler with over thirty years of experience. ♪

Minnesota Ojibwe Jingle Dancing Lesson

Lesson prepared by Cristina Seaborn, Lyz Jaakola and Nyssa Brown

Goals:

The students will:

1. perform a steady beat to a Jingle Dance (evaluated by informal performance assessment)
2. know the following (evaluated by elected Response/short answer; either pencil and paper or interactive whiteboard)
 - a. Jingle dress comes from Anishinaabe people
 - b. Jingle dance is for healing and it came from a dream.
 - c. The cones are made from the top of tin cans (snuff cans)
 - d. The jingle dress creates its own rhythm that is different from the drum

Standard/Benchmark (partially) Assessed:

Grades 4-5

Strand I: Artistic Foundations

Standard 3: Demonstrate understanding of the personal, social, cultural, historical contexts that influence the arts areas

1. Describe the cultural and historical traditions of music including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities

Student activities:

1. Review what we learned about Minnesota American Indian people from last class (class discussion)

2. Introduce Jingle Dress

T: “What do you know about Jingle Dresses?”

“If this is new, what do you think a Jingle Dress might be like?”

3. Watch video : “Sisters - Sharing the Tradition of the Jingle Dress”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BukF7wLYyIA>. Video Created by Kaya Membreno, With help from: Cecilia Martinez, Philys Nicole Isham, Kao Choua Vue, Brooklyn Isham, Marissa Mason, In Progress @ 2009. Community of youth living in the village of Nett Lake

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=de3Al0DIrxI> Created by Milla Carr. Special thanks to: Brooklyn Isham, Savannah Parisien, Kao

Na “Raynie” Vang, Kristine Sorensen

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phLL7U0tjOM&feature=related>
Anishibaabek Ogichiidaa sundance Turtle song. By: Desi Dillion. Raise your hand when you hear him sing the word “Anishinaabe.”

In Anishinaabe mythology, particularly among the Ojibwa, *Nanabozho* is a spirit, and figures prominently in their storytelling, including the story of the world’s creation. *Nanabozho* is the Ojibwe trickster figure and culture hero (these two archetypes are often combined into a single figure in First Nations mythologies).

Nanabozho was one of four sons of *Wiininwaa* (“Nourishment”), a human mother, and *E-bangishimog* (“In the West”), a spirit father.

Nanabozho most often appears in the shape of a rabbit and is characterized as a trickster. In his rabbit form, he is called *Mishaa-booz* (“Great rabbit” or “Hare”) or *Chi-waaboos* (“Big rabbit”). He was sent to Earth by *Gitchi Manitou* to teach the Ojibwe. One of his first tasks was to name all the plants and animals. *Nanabozho* is considered to be the founder of *Midewiwin*. Like the Egyptian god Thoth, he is thought to be the inventor of fishing and hieroglyphs. This deity is a shape-shifter and a cocreator of the world.

In more recent myths among the Ojibwe, *Nanabozho* saves the forests from Paul Bunyan. They fought for forty days and nights, and *Nanabozho* killed Bunyan with a Red Lake walleye.

4. Reflect on “Sisters” video:

T: “What did you learn about Jingle Dancing from the kids?”

T: “How does the girl feel about being a jingle dress dancer?”

S: Many responses, including, “The jingle dress is for healing.”

5. Read Jingle Dancer book by Cynthia L. Smith

T: “What did you learn from reading our book?”

T: “How many jingles did she borrow from each person? And why?”

T: “What are jingles made of?”

6. Watch Jingle Dance video

T: “While you watch, keep a steady beat on your index fingers.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZaFIEuDOK0>

7. Watch Jingle Dance video again

T: Give drum and tambourine to different students

Ss: Practice tapping index fingers together (steady beat)

Ss: Practice clapping rhythm of drum (T: model loud and soft)

Ss: Practice clapping rhythm of jingle dress

T: Informal assessment of Ss keeping the beat with the drum.

Next Step:

Ss: ½ class claps drum rhythm and ½ class claps jingle dress rhythm (switch)

8. Knowledge assessment

Ss: complete a 4-question assessment (either pencil and paper or via interactive whiteboard):

a. Jingle dress comes from **Anishinaabe** or Lakota people (circle one)

b. Jingle dance is for healing and it came from a dream. – T or F

c. What are the cones of Jingle Dress made of?

_____ (The cones are made from the top of tin cans soup cans/snuff cans.)

d. The jingle dress and the drum have the same rhythm or a **different rhythm**? (circle one)

Expert at fiddling and jazz improvisation, Cristina Seaborn holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in jazz violin performance from Berklee College of Music in Boston, and a Masters in Conducting for Orchestra from St. Cloud State University. In symphonies, quartets, jazz ensembles, and folk/rock bands, her musical background includes influences in classical, jazz, Celtic, bluegrass and Texas swing fiddle.

Lyz Jaakola (Mezzo Soprano) is an Anishinaabe musician and educator enrolled with the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe. Lyz balances singing in many styles and educating about Native American music internationally amidst her teaching schedule at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

Nyssa Brown is an international consultant specializing in professional and curriculum development for music educators. Her approach integrates music, as a subject area, and music educators into the broader educational community of the school, strengthening the learning for all involved. †