

MUSIC OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES: TEACHER’S GUIDE

The Music of the American Colonies Teacher’s Guide is designed to help teachers use the CD and accompanying booklet. It is hoped that the project will assist teachers in their effort to help students understand the music and history of the American colonial period. Teachers are granted permission to make photocopies of this teacher’s guide for classroom use. This teacher’s guide was written by Elaine A. Papandrea.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Included here are activities that can be used with the Music of the American Colonies audio project and accompanying booklet. The activities are separated into three disciplines, or curriculum connections. However, the activities can be adapted to other disciplines. Teachers and students may expand upon the activities as they choose.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: AMERICAN HISTORY

Activity 1

Play the music as students walk into class. Once they are settled, ask them if they know what time in history the music is from (colonial period). Then brainstorm events that occurred at this time in history, and create a timeline using the events the class brainstormed. Discuss each event with the class. A brief timeline is included to help begin the discussion.

TIMELINE

1492—Christopher Columbus arrives in the New World.

1587—The colony of Roanoke, Virginia, is settled.

1607—Jamestown, Virginia, is settled.

1619—First African slaves arrive in Jamestown.

1620—Pilgrims settle Plymouth, Massachusetts.

1630—Puritans found Massachusetts Bay Colony.

1664—New Netherland becomes New York.

1692–1693—Salem witchcraft trials take place.

1732—Colony of Georgia established by James Oglethorpe.

1754–1763—French and Indian War is fought.

1765—Stamp Act passed.

1776—Declaration of Independence is signed, declaring America’s independence from England.

Activity 2

Teach students the steps to “Gathering Peascods” (track 3), a circle dance. Dance instructions can be found on pages 12, 13, and 14 of the enclosed booklet. Assemble students in a circle. Go through the instructions to the dance. We suggest that an adult act

as “caller,” and call out the steps with no music at first. Once the students learn the steps, have them dance to the music of “Gathering Peascods.”

Activity 3

Use the “Olaudah Equiano Reading” (below) to begin a discussion about slavery. Play the reading (track 16) for the class. Then discuss how Equiano and other Africans became slaves. Continue to discuss the slave trade. Have students research where slaves came from, what ports they left from, and where they landed in the New World. Then students could show their findings on a map of Africa and the Americas.

Suggested titles for teacher reference:

Diedrich, Maria; Gates, Henry Louis, Jr.; and Pedersen, Carl T. eds. *Black Imagination and the Middle Passage*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1999.

McNeese, Tim. *The Rise and Fall of American Slavery: Freedom Denied, Freedom Gained*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow Publishers, Inc., 2004.

Yetman, Norman R., ed. *Voices from Slavery: 100 Authentic Slave Narratives*. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publication, Inc., 2000.

OLAUDAH EQUIANO READING

The first object that saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor . . . These filled me with astonishment, that was soon converted into terror . . . when I was carried on board. . . . I was now persuaded that I had got into a world of bad spirits, and that they were going to kill me. Their complexions too, differing so much from ours, their long hair, and the language they spoke, which was very different from any I had ever heard, united to confirm me in this belief. . . . When I looked round the ship too, and saw . . . a multitude of black people, of every description, chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; . . . I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and with my crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat. . . . O, ye nominal Christians! might not an African ask you, “learned you this from your God, who says unto you, Do unto all men as you would men should do unto you?”

[Ten years later]

I made my obeisance to my master, and with my money in my hand, and many fears in my heart, I prayed him to be as good as his offer to me, when he was pleased to promise me my freedom soon as I could purchase it. . . . [H]e began to recoil; and my heart that instant sunk within me. “What,” said he, “give you your freedom? Why, where did you get the money? Have you got forty pounds sterling?” “Yes, sir,” I answered. . . . [My friend] the Captain then said he knew I got the money very honestly . . . On which my master . . . said he would not have made me the promise which he did, had he thought I should have got the money so soon. “Come, come,” said my worthy Captain, clapping my master on the back, “Come, Robert, (which was his name) I think you must let him have his freedom . . .” My master then said, he would not be worse than his promise; . . . These words of my master were like a voice from heaven to me: . . . I most reverently

bowed myself with gratitude, unable to express my feelings, but by the overflowing of my eyes . . . [My master] signed the manumission that day; so that, before night, I, who had been a slave in the morning, trembling at the will of another, was become my own master, and completely free. . . . [P]eople immediately styled me by a new appellation,—to me the most desirable in the world,—which was “Freeman.”

Activity 4

Have students research what people ate, how they dressed, and what they might have done for entertainment in a colonial tavern. Have the students share their research with the class by recreating a colonial tavern. They can dress in the clothing, make and eat the foods, and listen to the music of this time period according to their research. They can sit at tables dining on colonial food and discussing the major issues of the time. In the background, the music of the time can be playing. Have two to three students stroll through the tavern, pretending to play the music. Enclosed is a list of the possible contents of a tavern.

Tavern contents:

Candles, wooden tables, wooden chairs, plates (wooden, metal, or ceramic, not plastic), forks, spoons, knives (metal, not plastic), ceramic mugs, napkins (cloth, not paper), pitchers for drink, and paintings on the walls.

Activity 5

Use the “Canasatego Reading” (below) to begin a discussion on the Iroquois League and the Native American nations that made up the league. Play the reading (track 11) for the class. Then discuss the different nations and what the league did for those people.

CANASATEGO READING

We know that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in colleges, and that the maintenance of our young men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinced, therefore, that you mean to do us good by your proposal, and we thank you heartily. But you, who are wise, must know that different nations have different conceptions of things, and you will therefore not take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some experience of it. Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the Northern Provinces. They were instructed in all your sciences, but, when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either cold or hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, nor kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, nor counsellors; they were totally good for nothing. We are, however, not the less obliged by your kind offer, though we decline accepting it, and, to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: MUSIC

Activity 6

Ask students to research one of the musical instruments found in the American colonies,

using books or online sources found in the library. Have them present their research findings to the class in oral or written form. The instruments used on this CD include a balaphone, baroque guitar, baroque violin, djembe, glass armonica, hammered dulcimer, harpsichord, theorbo, and water drum. Other instruments of the time were the German flute, English flute (recorder), cello, and English guitar.

Activity 7

Students can construct one of the instruments found in the American colonies. Enclosed are instructions showing how to build a simple drum and a simple stringed instrument.

Stringed instrument: In order to make a simple stringed instrument, you can use small boxes, gift boxes, or stationery boxes. Cut a circle (1 to 2 inches in diameter) in the top of the box. This is the sound hole. Then put different-sized rubber bands lengthwise around the box. Make sure the rubber bands go over the sound hole. Optional: you can take two pencils and place one on each side of the cutout circle (sound hole) as bridges.¹

Drum: In order to make a simple drum, several different kinds of containers can be used. You can use a coffee can with a plastic lid. If you remove the metal bottom, it will make a better sound. However, if you are making a water drum, do not remove the bottom. Cover the outside of the can with paper, and let the students decorate it. For bongo drums, you can use a small nut can with a plastic lid. You can also use pottery jars, flowerpots, or heavy metal kettles. For the head, you can tie a light 100 percent cotton canvas over the top. Then dampen the canvas. This will cause the canvas to shrink. Now it will sound like a drum. In order to make a water drum, fill the container with a half cup of water. Strike the top of the drums with fingers or sticks.

Activity 8

Locate several African and/or Native American instruments. Bring them to class and demonstrate each one. Let students try the instruments. Then have the class try to compose a song using the instruments. A list of instruments has been included under Activity 9.

Activity 9

Students could research African and/or Native American music and instruments. Then they can present their findings in written or oral form.

African instruments include: birimbau, bamboo fiddle, calabash, kora, African water drum, lyres (bagana, kerar, and obukano), end-blown flute, side-blown flute, gong, kalunga, kettledrum, mirliton, sistra, xylophone, and stamping stick.

Native American instruments include: Indian love flute, square hand drum, Apache dancing bells, Indian dancing bells, Navajo drum rattle, Pak'Papa (California Indian Clapper), Sioux Indian rasp, tlapiztali, and clay whistle flute.

Activity 10

Play one or more songs for the class. While the music is playing, have the students draw

what they hear. Encourage them to use their imagination. Suggested songs include “In the Fields in Frost and Snows” (track 14) and “Great Lord Frog to Lady Mouse” (track 8).

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: ENGLISH

Activity 11

Choose either “A Tobacco Song” (track 2) or “New England’s Annoyances” (track 5) from the CD. Give each student a copy of the lyrics, which have been included in this guide and may be reproduced. The lyrics have been printed without the glossary (the glossary can be found at the bottom of pages 11 and 19 in the accompanying booklet). Play the song for the class. Have the class translate the song into modern English. Do not share the glossary definitions with the class until they have finished writing their translations.

Activity 12

Students should choose one song and write an essay about what they think the song means. After they have finished writing, the teacher can discuss the different interpretations that were written.

Activity 13

Play the “Canasatego Reading” (track 11; text below). Then have the class write an essay comparing and contrasting the Haudenasaunee education of young people with the European education of young people in colonial times.

CANASATEGO READING

We know that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in colleges, and that the maintenance of our young men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinced, therefore, that you mean to do us good by your proposal, and we thank you heartily. But you, who are wise, must know that different nations have different conceptions of things, and you will therefore not take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some experience of it. Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the Northern Provinces. They were instructed in all your sciences, but, when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either cold or hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, nor kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, nor counsellors; they were totally good for nothing. We are, however, not the less obliged by your kind offer, though we decline accepting it, and, to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them.

SUGGESTED FICTION BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

For Younger Readers

Avi. *Night Journeys*, Volume 1. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999
Collier, James Lincoln and Collier, Christopher. *My Brother Sam is Dead*. Scholastic,

Inc., 1985.

Hermes, Patricia. *Our Strange New Land*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2000.

Kassem, Lou. *A Haunting in Williamsburg*. New York: Avon Camelot, 1990.

Moss, Marissa. *Emma's Journal: The Story of a Colonial Girl*. San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt Brace, 1999.

Nixon, Joan Lowry. *Caesar's Story*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2000.

Osborne, Mary Pope. *Standing in the Light*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1998.

Rinaldi, Ann. *A Break With Charity*. San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt Children's Books, 1992.

Speare, Elizabeth George. *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1972.

Tripp, Valerie. *Felicity's Dancing Shoes*. Middleton, Wis. Pleasant Publications, 2000.

Van Leeuwen, Jean. *Hannah of Fairfield*. New York: Phyllis Fogelman Books, 2000.

— — —. *Hannah's Winter of Hope*. New York: Phyllis Fogelman Books, 2000.

For Older Readers

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. New York: Bantam Books, 1965.

Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1996.

NOTES ON SOURCES FOR ACTIVITIES

American History Activity 1

Bonnie L. Lukes, *Colonial America* (San Diego, Calif.: Lucent Books, Inc., 2000), pp. 8–9.

Mary Hull, *The Boston Tea Party in American History* (Springfield, N.J.: Enslow Publishers, Inc., 1999), p. 119.

American History Activity 4

1. Michael Olmert, *Official Guide to Colonial Williamsburg* (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1985).

Music Activity 7

1. Ilene Hunter and Marilyn Judson, *Simple Folk Instruments to Make and to Play* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977), p. 136.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

Music Activity 9

1. Ilene Hunter and Marilyn Judson, *Simple Folk Instruments to Make and to Play* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977), pp. 122–123.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

3. Diagram Group, *Musical Instruments of the World* (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1976), p. 113.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 170–171.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

6. Hunter and Judson, p. 150.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 57–58.

9. Ibid., p. 54.
10. Ibid., p. 37.
11. Ibid., p. 29.
12. Diagram Group, p. 18.

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