



Fiddling, Jazz, Mariachi, Rock and Blues in the Orchestra

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Why include alternative styles of music in your teaching, both in and out of the curricular day?

Alternative styles of music such as fiddling, jazz and mariachi are particularly effective in addressing the following National Standards:

- Performing on instruments, alone and with others a varied repertoire of music.
- Improvising melodies, variations and accompaniments.
- Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
- Listening to, analyzing and describing music.
- Understanding relationships between music, the other arts and disciplines outside the arts
- Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

And:

- Invite the participation of guitarist, banjo player, pianists, singers, and performer of other instruments not usually associated with the string program and can result in the formation of a unique showcase performing group.
- Represent hundreds of years of diverse musical traditions.
- Stimulate alternative educational/social environment for multi-age, mixed-ability, and heterogeneous instrumental group instruction. That's a fancy way of saying kids love it, everybody can participate, and the music is really cool.
- Students are more thoroughly engaged by active creation than in flawless replication.
- The form and traditional performance practice of playing these tunes invites but does not necessarily require repetition, improvisation, stylistically specific ornamentation, speed variation, bowing variation, ear-training, and other pedagogical elements critical to string teaching.
- Because of their principal function as entertainment and dance music, fiddle tunes lie, by-and-large, "under the fingers," are in open-string keys, may be easily transposed, have strong rhythms, and are thus readily accessible and interesting to a wide range of abilities.
- Invites students to engage in cooperative, cross-cultural, national heritage, interdisciplinary, exploratory, self-directed, and other learning experiences. Leadership is encouraged and nurtured.
- Traditional music making is participatory, and invites a sense of community.
- Make it fit your community!

Several Styles

Fiddling

- Fiddle groups need a *solo instrument*, a *bass line*, and a *harmony instrument*.
- Fiddle tunes can and should be taught by ear.
- An arrangement simply means deciding the order of the tune and the breaks and then which instrument will play tune, harmony and bass lines in each section. Open it up to your group and let them help with ideas. Let students actually write and teach an arrangement.

The Mariachi

The traditional instruments: Modern Mariachi ensembles often consist of six violins, guitar, guitarron, vihuela, singers and two or three trumpets. The violins normally play in harmony with the first violin playing the melody. Bowing patterns are always uniform as they would be in a classical orchestra. The guitar and vihuela often play synchronized rhythms. Sometimes the vihuela adds varied rhythmic patterns to create forward motion. Guitar and vihuela players serve both a harmonic and rhythmic function in the ensemble.

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The guitarron plays the bass line in octaves, most often on the beat but sometimes off. Guitarron, guitar and vihuela players make up the rhythm section known as the armonia. Trumpets can double the melody but often provide rhythmic and melodic fills to add color and interest to the music.

The Main Elements of Jazz

1. a special beat called swing
 - difficult to define in words or in exact musical terms, when it is played, swing can be able to heard and felt. Part of the swing feel is in the way eighth notes are played. Traditional eighth notes are played as even divisions of quarter notes. In jazz, the eighth notes have a different time value. Two eighth notes still equal a quarter note, but the first one is a little longer and the second a little shorter. Syncopation also plays a part in making jazz “swing”. Phrases often begin by anticipating or delaying the downbeat by an eighth note. A melody is a series of notes. Improvised rhythms and melodies together over a swing beat is jazz. The rhythm section and the beat are of utmost importance
 - can be added to any tune
2. Improvisation
 - We all make things up as we go along as a normal part of life. Consider a conversation: you respond to what someone says rather than read from a script. Improvisation is a form of musical conversation. Once you learn the vocabulary (Prep Pages) with echoes, then conversations are possible
3. What makes jazz different from other styles of music?
 - The differences present themselves in the rhythms, use of blues scales and modes to create melodies, the roll of the bass, piano, and drum set in the rhythm section, and the fact that much of the music will be improvised.

Teaching Improvisation

1. Echo rhythms or melodic patterns in mass. Then individually (1/2/4 bars.)
2. Echo rhythms or melodic patterns in a conversation in mass then individually. (1/2/4 bars.)
3. Play follow the leader with rhythms or melodic patterns and then with variation parameters. (1/2/4 bars.)
4. Play 12 bar solos with each student playing 1 bar or rhythm or pitches then progress to 2 and 4 etc.
5. Half the group plays every other bar while the other half improvises rhythm or melody then (1/2/4 bars)
6. Play every other bar of tune and improvise alternate bars then progress to 2 and 4 etc.
7. Students Improvise with rhythms or melodic patterns (1/2/4 bars)

Ideas for Improvisation

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|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Articulation | 11. Slides |
| 2. Rhythm | 12. String Crossings |
| 3. Rests/Space | 13. Bowings |
| 4. Dynamics | 14. Interval skips |
| 5. Slurs | 15. Riffs or Ositnatos |
| 6. Pitches | 16. Drones |
| 7. Upper Neighbors | 17. Harmony |
| 8. Lower Neighbors | |
| 9. Fill long tones (connecting notes) | |
| 10. Double Stops | |

Other styles to consider

Blues
Latin
Rock
Klezmer

Resources

- *Jazz Philharmonic and Jazz Philharmonic: Second Set, Sabien and Phillips*
- *Fiddlers Philharmonic, Fiddlers Philharmonic Encore!, Dabczynski and Phillips*
- *Basic Fiddlers Philharmonic: Old Time, Basic Fiddlers Philharmonic: Celtic*
- *Mariachi Philharmonic, Nieto and Phillips*
- *String Explorer, Dabczynski, Meyer, and Phillips – improv included in activity pages*
- *Alfred Music Publishing, Alternative Styles series of performance music for strings*
- *Alfred Music Publishing, Belwin Pop Series – rock arrangements*
- *The Creative Band and Orchestra, Julie Lyon Lieberman, Huiksi Music*
- Randysabien.com
- Jeremykittel.com

Alternative styles music: addressing curricular issues

1. Describing the problem with bow arms – “Seven Wicked Reels”
 - ❑ Suzie Sluggish
 - ❑ Larry Lazy
 - ❑ Andy Armlock
 - ❑ Cathy Crooked

2. The variables of sound: intonation, tone and
 - ❑ Placement
 - ❑ Weight
 - ❑ Speed

3. The bow again
 - ❑ To stop or not to stop, and when to stop stopping
 - ❑ Moving from the middle out

4. Large muscle movement
 - ❑ Movement sequence – “Seven Wicked Reels”
 - ❑ Dance – American Circle

5. Rhythmically driven (groove based) music vs. expressive music
 - ❑ Baroque – Rhythmic and metronomic
 - ❑ Classical – Delicate and controlled
 - ❑ Romantic – Passionate and rubato
 - ❑ Contemporary – Rhythmic with altered bow strokes
 - ❑ Alternative – Rhythmic (groove based) and driving
 - ❑ World – Rhythmic (multi-metered) and driving

6. The media IS the message – Rhythm sections rule!
 - ❑ Speed – “Janie Be Good” from *Jazz Philharmonic*
 - ❑ Style – “Cripple Creek” from *Fiddlers Philharmonic*
 - ❑ String Crossings – “Haste to the Wedding” from *Fiddlers Philharmonic: Celtic Fiddle Tunes*
 - ❑ Energy – “El Cascabel” from *Mariachi Philharmonic*

7. Using repertoire to teach and motivate
 - ❑ Fiddling – “Bonnie James” from *Basic Fiddlers Philharmonic: Old Time Fiddle Tunes*
 - ❑ Jazz – “Groovin’ for the First Time” from *Jazz Philharmonic*
 - ❑ Rock/Funk – “In a Funk” from *Jazz Philharmonic: Encore*
 - ❑ Fiddling - “MacPherson’s Lament” from *Basic Fiddlers Philharmonic: Celtic Fiddle Tunes*
 - ❑ Mariachi – “Cielito Lindo” from *Mariachi Philharmonic*