



Smithsonian Folkways

An Introduction to Irish Music

A Smithsonian Folkways Lesson

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Summary:

Explore Irish and Irish-American history and culture through song lyrics, dance, and instrument demonstrations. Follow the music and play along with melody sheets and band transcriptions.

Suggested Grade Levels: 9-12

Country: Ireland

Region: Northern Europe

Culture Group: Irish; Irish-American

Genre: Protest Songs; Dance

Instruments: Voice, Band

Language: Irish, English

Co-Curricular Areas: Social Studies

National Standards: 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9

Objective:

- Learn about Irish culture, geography, history, and music

Materials:

- “Foggy Dew” by Brian Clark from *The Irish Rebellion Album* (FW05413)
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/brian-clark/foggy-dew/celtic-historical-song-struggle-protest-world/music/track/smithsonian>
- “Barney Bralligan” by Tom Byrne, Frank Barrett & Tom McCaffrey from *Irish Music From Cleveland, Vol. 2: The Community Tradition* (FW03521)
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/tom-byrne-frank-barrett-tom-mccaffrey/barney-bralligan/celtic-world/music/track/smithsonian>
- “Glen Allen/Music in the Glen (medley)” by Tom Byrne, Frank Barrett & Tom McCaffrey from *Irish Music From Cleveland, Vol. 2: The Community Tradition* (FW03521)
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/tom-byrne-frank-barrett-tom-mccaffrey/glen-allen/music-in-the-glen-medley/celtic-world/music/track/smithsonian>
- Lyric sheet
- Melody sheets and band transcriptions (see attached)
- A map of Ireland
- Various video clips as noted for specific experiences

Lesson Segments:

1. “Foggy Dew” (National Standards 1, 2, 5, 8, 9)
2. “Barney Bralligan”(National Standards 1, 5, 6, 8)
3. “Glen Allen / Music in the Glen Medley” (National Standards 2, 6, 9)

1. “Foggy Dew”

- a. Read the original lyrics to Verse 1.
- b. Play the melody on band instruments.
- c. Sing the original lyrics to Verse 1.
- d. Listen to and read the substitute lyrics to Verse 1.
- e. Sing the substitute lyrics to Verse 1.
- f. Find Dublin on a map of Ireland.
- g. Talk about the 1916 Easter Rising and the fight for a free Irish state.
- h. How is the Easter Rising similar to other historical events? Which events and why?
- i. Discuss other songs students know where lyrics have been changed for political or other purposes.

Foggy Dew

Traditional First Verse

Oh, a wan cloud was drawn o'er the dim weeping dawn as to Shannon's side I return'd at last
And the heart in my breast for the girl I lov'd best was beating, ah, beating, loud and fast!
While the doubts and the fears of the long aching years seem'd mingling their voices with the
moaning flood
Till full in my path, like a wild water wrath

Substitute First Verse

As down the glen one Easter morn to a city fair rode I,
There I met lines of marching men in squadrons passed me by,
No pipe did hum, no battle drum, did sound it's loud tattoo,
But, beyond jealous bells of the Liffey swell rang out through the FOGGY DEW

Assessment: Students should be able to sing in rhythm and with melodic accuracy. They should be able to apply the concepts of history to the music.

2. “Barney Bralligan”

- a. Listen to the recording of “Barney Bralligan” and pat your knee or clap your hands with the strong beats in the music.
- b. Without seeing the music, try to discern the meter of the piece.
- c. Determine what instruments are being played.
- d. Follow the melody with the written music and determine the form of the piece.
- e. Discuss the most likely purpose of this type of music (a Slip Jig).
- f. Play (or sing) the “Slip Jig Rhythm Exercise”.
- g. View a video of traditional Irish dancing freely available on video sites on the Internet or view an excerpt from “Riverdance” online.
- h. View an old video of a Ceiili performing in 1963 on video sites (freely available on the Internet).

Assessment: Students should audibly detect both rhythm and melody from the piece, and relate the concepts of Irish culture to the music.

3. “Glen Allen / Music in the Glen Medley”

- a. Listen to the recording while reading the melody line and raise your hand when “Music in the Glen”, the second tune in the medley, begins.
- b. Try to play the melody of “Music in the Glen” on your instrument.
- c. This is traditional Irish music, but played in America. What historical events might explain the large Irish-American population?

Assessment: Students should audibly detect the difference between the two tunes, and understand, through questioning, the historical facts of the Irish-American population.

Extensions:

- Compare and contrast a video of traditional Irish dance (i.e. “Riverdance”)
- Make a *bodhran* using an embroidery hoop, some oil cloth and a spoon (or other items...be creative); good sources for information on making a *bodhran* are freely available on the Internet
- Listen to The Chieftains recording of “Jack of All Trades” and then write additional verses about other possible trades Jack could have tried while using the same metric structure. Given what you know about Ireland, what are some traditional Irish occupations?

References:

- **Breathnach, B. (1996).** *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland.* Loudon, N.H.: Ossian USA.
 - An academic study of the history, development and present state of traditional Irish music and dance. Includes special references to the fiddle, Uilleann pipes, and the tin whistle.
- **Hast, D. E. & Scott, S. (2004).** *Music In Ireland: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press.
 - Introduces traditional Irish music, vocal and instrumental, along with information on Irish dance. Includes information on social and political importance of Irish music. Includes a seventy minute CD.
- **O'Neill, J. (1998).** *O'Neill's Music of Ireland.* Pacific, MO.: Mel Bay Publications, Inc.
 - This is a 368 page book that contains notated airs, jigs, reels, hornpipes and marches for fiddle.
- **Shaskeen (2006).** *Shaskeen: Irish Pub Sessions (DVD).* Doonaree Records.
 - Irish folk music performance recorded live in a pub outside Dublin. This DVD is noted for its excellent camera work allowing one to see the instruments and performers very well.
- **Various Artists (2005).** *Traditional Irish Music (DVD).* Shoreview, MN: Fieldstone Entertainment.
 - This is a DVD with concert performances of traditional Irish music groups. Included are The Border Collies, Devana, and Four Men and a Dog.

Foggy Dew

5

Fl.

B \flat Cl.

A. Sx.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

Perc.

Fine

1. 2.

2

Behind the Mountains

17

P1

la _____ oh _____

P2

P3

P4

21

P1

teh _____ leh _____

P2

P3

P4

Foggy Dew

D.C. al Fine 4

15

Fl.

B \flat Cl.

A. Sx.

Hn.

Tbn.

Tuba

Perc.

D.C. al Fine

Barney Bralligan

Irish Slip Jig

Flute

5

9

14

Flute

Music In The Glen

Traditional Irish Reel

