

Fiesta Aquí, Fiesta Allá: Exploring Music and Dance in Puerto Rico, its Diaspora, and the Caribbean

A Smithsonian Folkways Learning Pathway for
students in Grades 9–12



Teacher's Guide

Lesson 8:

Vejegante a la Bolla: Puerto Rico's Carnival Tradition

Lesson Overview

Puerto Rico has a longstanding Carnival tradition with strong ties to the Caribbean and Latin America. Celebrations such as the Ponce Carnival are vestiges of traditions that date to the Spanish colonial period. Carnival fiestas in the Caribbean blend European, African, and Indigenous elements into performances that combine ritual, theatre and music. As recurring events celebrated each year before the Lenten season, Carnivals offer colorful and effervescent spectacles that bring communities together to celebrate their shared Hispanic and Afro-Caribbean ancestry and culture through symbolic performances that often juxtapose the sacred and the secular.

Carnival celebrations in Puerto Rico typically involve processions with masked characters and mobile floats called *comparsas* accompanied by music. Common characters include *Vejegante* (devil trickster), *Loca* (crazy woman), *Viejo* (old man), and *Rey Momo* (King of Carnival). The music ensembles that accompany processions vary in size and instrumentation. Formats vary from large ensembles such as marching bands and medium orchestras combining wind, percussion, bass and other string instruments to small *conjuntos* (string instruments), *plena* ensembles and even *calypso* bands. Genres can also vary greatly; Afro-Caribbean music with lively and contagious rhythms are preferred: *plena*, *bomba*, *samba*, *merengue*, *calypso*, *soca*.

This lesson explores the music, dance, and theatrical aspects of Puerto Rico's Carnival and contextualizes these fiestas into the broader Carnival tradition of the Caribbean and Latin America. Students will experience musical styles associated with Carnival celebrations throughout the region and will synthesize their learning through creative activities (such as making vejegante masks and/or composing music “in the style of” plena and/or calypso).

© 2023 Smithsonian Institution. Personal, educational, and non-commercial uses allowed; commercial rights reserved. See Smithsonian [terms of use](#) for more information.

FOLKWAYS

In This Guide

Lesson Overview	1
Lesson Components and Student Objectives	2
Teaching Plan	3
2014 National Music Standards Connections	30
Additional Reading and Resources	33
Worksheets	35

Lesson Components and Student Objectives*



1. **Carnival in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Beyond** (30+ minutes)

- Describe the history, influences, and purposes of Carnival in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Identify some common elements and rituals of Carnival celebrations around the world.
- Identify and describe some local traditions and music genres in Latin America and the Caribbean that are associated with Carnival.



2. **Celebrating Carnival in Puerto Rico** (30+ minutes)







- Describe the Carnival “scene” in Puerto Rico.
- Explain the role of the *vejigante* in the Puerto Rico Carnival tradition.
- Identify and describe the musical genres commonly associated with Carnival in Puerto Rico.
- Create art that is inspired by Puerto Rican Carnival (make a *vejigante* mask or create music “in the style of” plena).



3. **Calypso: Connecting Communities** (30+ minutes)

- Explain how calypso music connects communities in the Caribbean region.
- Identify the important musical features of calypso music.
- Perform a rhythmic and harmonic groove inspired by calypso music.
- Within specific guidelines, write your own calypso.

*Note: The learning icons used above signify the type of learning used in each Component. Keep in mind that these Components are not intended to be sequential; rather, teachers or students may choose which Components they’d like to use from each Lesson. The time estimate given for each component indicates “in class” time. The + indicates there are optional extension activities and/or a suggested homework assignment.

While all learning types ( History and Culture,  Music Listening,  Music Making and Creation, and  Creative Connections) fulfill 2014 National Music Standards, non-music teachers will be able to use  History and Culture and  Creative Connections Components without specific musical knowledge.

Teaching Plan



1. Component One: Carnival in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, and Beyond

To prepare:

- Read through the component.
- Preview the **Lesson 8, Component 1 Slideshow** (slides 4–22).
 - Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson landing page. (*If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow” link, which will not show the notes.*)
- Optional: Print copies of the map worksheet for students.

Slide 1–3: Information for the Teacher

Slide 4: Component 1 Introduction Slide – *What is Carnival?*

Before moving forward with the content of this Component, ask students: *What do you already know about Carnival? Where is it celebrated? What does the celebration entail?* After leading a short discussion based on student responses, advance to the next slide.

Slide 5: Carnival!

Watch Video:

- Consider starting this component by showing the embedded video, which will provide students with a glimpse of what Carnival celebrations are like in Puerto Rico (and surrounding areas).
 - This video was captured in the southern city of Ponce in 2020. Ponce boasts one of the oldest and largest carnival celebrations in Puerto Rico (163 years old). The event is structured around a series of parades and public events and attracts delegations of marching bands, dance troupes, floats, and music groups from around the island (and sometimes world). The event also attracts many local and international tourists.

Slide 6: The Roots of Carnival

Share Information:

- *Carnival* is a festivity that takes place in many countries around the world.
 - Carnival is tied to the Catholic religion and occurs just before the Lenten season. Celebrations culminate around the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.

- An example you might be familiar with is the celebration of Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) in New Orleans.
- The etymology of the word carnival is believed to originate from the Latin “carnemlevare”—to take away or remove meat. Thus the 40 days of fasting and other ascetic practices observed during Lent (practicing self discipline/abstaining from indulgences).
- The roots of the festival are believed to date back to Medieval times in Europe (e.g., Carnival of Venice) and even earlier as a pagan ritual honoring the beginning of the new year and rebirth of nature.
- **During Carnival, masked people fill the streets, provoking fun and laughter.**
 - **Dances, parties, and processions are common, as people abandon the routine of work life and turn to play and indulge in worldly pleasures.**

Slide 7: From the Old World to the New

Share Information:

- European settlers brought Carnival from the Old World to the New World. Carnival in different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean flourished into syncretic traditions that blended Old European Pagan and Catholic elements with those it acquired in the new world from native Indigenous and African peoples.
 - Note: Syncretism is the process of combining competing belief systems and blending cultural practices.
- In the Americas, Carnival developed new and local forms of expression; classic characters such as the *Harlequin* (clown trickster) from Venetian Commedia dell arte (an early form of professional theatre that originated in Italy) gave way to new ones, such as *Vejigante* (a dancing devil -trickster with clear Afro Caribbean characteristics). Others such as *Viejo* (old man), *Loca* (crazy woman), and *Rey Momo* (King of Carnival, a character derived from Greek mythology, personifies satire and mockery) appear to be timeless archetypes recreated in the New World.
 - **View images of these characters on the next slide!**

Slide 8: Carnival Characters

View Images:

- View images of the characters discussed on the previous slide.
 - Note: The vejigante character will be featured in Component 2. To learn more about the vejigante character within the context of Fiesta Santiago de Apóstol in Puerto Rico, visit Lesson 6.

Slide 9: The Importance of Music and Dance

Share Information:

- Music and dance are essential to Carnival in Latin America and the Caribbean; actually, it could be said these arts embody the spirit of carnival.
 - Certain music genres in the Caribbean are closely tied to Carnival, such as *calypso* and *soca* (Trinidad and other islands of English-speaking Caribbean), *plena* (Puerto Rico), *samba* (Brazil) and *conga* (Cuba).
 - Note: Students will have a chance to listen to conga later in this Component. Plena and samba are featured in Component 2. Students will have a chance to make music “in the style of” calypso in Component 3.
 - Throughout the region, music, movement, and dance excites masses of people who move through Carnival processions. The exciting rhythms of carnival music, coupled with the agility of dancers’ bodies in motion and their vibrant, elaborate costumes, captivate participants and capture a “zest for life”.

Slide 10: Carnival Preparation

Share Information:

- Theatrical, musical, ludic (spontaneous and playful), and ritualistic components of Carnivals provide spectacles that attract many tourists and commercial interest, both local and international.
 - They have become a significant source of income for local artisans, mask-and-costume makers, food vendors, and instrument makers.
- Although Carnival itself is only celebrated for about a week, communities pull together pull together months in advance of the festivities (sometimes six months) to plan and prepare costumes, masks, music, crafts, food, etc.
 - In some places, little to no work gets done (except preparations for Carnival) between Christmas and Carnival!

Slide 11: Optional Video: Carnival Costumes

Share Information and Watch Video (Optional):

- Carnival is a source of income for local communities all over the Caribbean.
 - Throughout the region, there is a stark contrast in the price of costumes and the amount of money invested in Carnival. For local festivals, items made by small businesses are relatively cheap compared to commercial costumes and masks made for larger events (e.g., Trinidad Carnival).
- If time allows, watch a short clip from a documentary called “Cimarron Spirit.”
 - In the recommended excerpt (18:00–19:20), a seamstress in the Dominican Republic shares the story of how she makes money sewing cachúa costumes (a Carnival character).
 - Some additional context about the community featured in this documentary (from publicity materials for the film):

- “In the Dominican Republic, as early as 1512, African slaves escaped from Spanish plantations and lived with the island’s Taíno Indians or in their own mountainous jungles in the remote frontier land of Hispaniola (the Dominican Republic and Haiti). These people, who were known as *cimarrones* (maroons), created their own independent communities that have survived for centuries and until recently remained isolated from mainstream Dominican society. These resilient and resourceful ‘outlaws’ have long developed their own celebrations, many of which mock a society that enslaved and branded them.”
 - *Maroon* is a term for fugitive slaves who fled colonial oppression, forming their own enclaves, many times in rural areas far from the city.
- The documentary “Cimarron Spirit” takes a closer look at Carnivals organized by maroon communities in the Dominican Republic.
- Optional extension:
 - In Elias Piña, a maroon community on the border near Haiti, people celebrate Carnival on Easter Sunday with groups of dancers and ***gagá*** music.
 - You can listen to gagá music in “Cimarron Spirit” at 32:28.

Slide 12: “Living Carnival”

A. Share Information:

- Theatrical components of Carnival (masks, costumes, music and dance) make Carnival a "performance".
 - Unlike staged performances like a concert or a play, **Carnival performances do not differentiate between spectator and performer**, stage and public.
- Trinidad’s carnival specifically, the Caribbean’s largest celebration, promotes inclusivity and invites all to play and not merely observe passively.
 - **Performing Carnival in Trinidad is called "playing mas"**.
- According to important literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin, Carnival is an event in which all rules, inhibitions, restrictions, regulations, and hierarchy that determine the course of everyday life are suspended.
 - All people who take part in the carnival "live it" but it is not an extension of the "real world" or "real life" but rather, as Bakhtin puts it, "the world standing on its head", the world upside down. **Ask Jaime for appropriate citation for this for web bibliography.**
- The following excerpts were taken from a Carnival and Website, a platform which promotes Carnival festivals all over the world:
 - “When it comes to celebrating carnival in Trinidad and Tobago you can either just be a spectator and watch the parades, or you can join in! When you choose to join in it is called ***playing mas***. For those not familiar with Carnival in the Caribbean, if you want to “play mas” you have to join

a masquerade band. It isn't possible to just show up in a beautiful home-made costume and join the parade. You must select a mas band you want to be part of, wear their costumes and dance through the streets with your chosen band. To have the best time at carnival in Trinidad and Tobago don't just be a spectator! Absolutely find a *mas* band that you want to be part of, then sign up and join the party!"

B. Attentive Listening:

- **Experience the sonic environment:** Listen to the sounds of a Carnival parade, recorded live during in Port of Spain, Trinidad in 1956.
 - *What sounds do you hear? (people talking/laughing/cheering/having fun, shakers and other percussion instruments, steel drums, wind instruments [saxophones/trumpets])*

Slide 13: Carnival as an Industry

- In Trinidad (similar to many other locations), Carnival has become an industry with policy and regulations, created by the National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago, with organizing committees at local community and municipal levels.
- Carnival spectacles have become increasingly competitive and expensive. They often include costume and music contests, in which comparsas (groups of performers) win prizes and prestige.
 - As an example, **Panorama** is a huge annual steel band competition that takes place in Trinidad during Carnival.

Slide 14: Carnival as Resistance and Catharsis

Share Information:

- Especially considering the colonial history of slavery and oppression in the Americas, Carnival in this region can be viewed as a form of resistance and celebration of resilience and freedom.
 - Historically, enslaved people in these regions parodied their masters through play, music, mask, dance and costume.
 - Carnival was (and is) a moment to release social tensions through play and performance: laughter, pranks, eating, and pleasure ... living in the moment.
- Carnival for the oppressed masses throughout Latin Americas colonial history is a **cathartic celebration** both at social and spiritual levels.
 - Catharsis refers to the release of strong and repressed emotions.
 - Some cathartic/ritualistic practices associated with Carnival involve purging and cleansing/purification, and some represent liberation and freedom.

- As an example, the burning of the effigy of Judas (a common part of Carnival festivities) is a purification ritual—out with the old; in with the new.

Slide 15: Carnival: Place-Based with Common Elements

A. Share Information:

- Although Carnival celebrations are specific to place, there are certain common elements and rituals, such as music and dancing, processions/parades, masks, parties, the coronation and deposition of the king (or queen), and events such as the burning of an effigy (Judas).
- Many Carnivals around the world culminate with the *Burial of the Sardine* (El entierro de la Sardina).
 - This age-old ritual was brought to the new world by European colonizers and is celebrated in Carnivals around the Caribbean, Ponce Carnival in Puerto Rico, and coastal city of Naiguatá in Venezuela (where they have a strong Carnival tradition).

B. Watch Video:

- Watch the embedded video from Smithsonian Folkways Recordings to learn more about this interesting Carnival ritual.

Slide 16: Optional: Listen to Naiguatá Carnival Music

A. Share Information (Optional):

- In Naiguatá, Carnival is celebrated at Christmastime.
 - It has some interesting connections to Puerto Rico’s music and Christmas songs. For example, many popular songs borrow from Puerto Rican *aguinaldo* music, which is associated with Christmas at the celebration of the Three Kings.
 - Note: To learn all about aguinaldo music, see Lesson 3 of this Learning Pathway.
 - Interesting side note: The song “Parranda Callejera” has intertextual references to “Que cante mi gente”— a salsa song popularized by Hector Lavoe.

B. Attentive Listening (Optional):

- Listen to excerpts from two songs from Carnival repertoire in Naiguatá, Venezuela:
 - “Parranda Callejera” (Street Parranda)
 - Note: In this context, the term *parranda* refers to an Afro-Venezuelan musical genre based in group performance.
 - “Potpourri ‘Sabor a Navidad’” (“Taste of Christmas” Medley)

- *Do they sound like Christmas songs to you? Why or why not? (Answers will vary.) What musical characteristics do you notice? (Hints: Upbeat, danceable with a strong steady beat, brass instruments, percussion instruments, electronic instruments, keyboard, call and response/solo and group singing.)*

Slide 17: Inter-Island Connections: The Virgin Islands

A. Share Information:

- As we have already seen in this lesson, Carnival has contributed to many inter-island connections.
 - The movement of musicians throughout the region facilitates the sharing of culture and traditions.
- In St. Croix (U.S. Virgin Islands), Carnival is celebrated during the Christmas season.
 - During this time, **Quelbe** ensembles perform a wide array of music: calypso, merengue, lancers (type of folk dance), waltz, etc.
 - Quelbe is the official music style of the Virgin Islands, characterized by call-and-response singing and drumming, accompanied by African-influenced dance.

B. Watch Video

- In the embedded video, band members of Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights share personal stories about the importance of Quelbe music, their role in the community and their journey to get to where they are.
 - Note: The video is over 7 minutes long. If time is a limitation, consider watching just the first several minutes (so students can get a feel for the essence of this type of music).

Slide 18: More Inter-Island Connections: Cuba

A. Share Information:

- Cuba two largest cities Havana and Santiago boast the most well-known Carnivals on the island.
 - Santiago has one of most vibrant carnivals in the Caribbean.
 - **Conga** is the music that epitomizes the spirit of Santiago's carnival celebration.
 - "Carnaval in Havana is organized more as a spectator event than in Santiago. In Havana, Carnival consists of giant floats filled with musicians and dancers, which parade down avenue with bleachers on either side for the audience; this results in a more sedated feeling, because the people watching procession are just spectators, not participants. In contrast, Santiago Carnaval takes place in

the streets, and everyone gets involved” (Liner notes for “Carnaval in Cuba”, Folkways Recordings).

B. Attentive Listening:

- Listen to an excerpt from “Conga de Santiago”, performed by the famed group, Conga de los Hoyos.
 - Ask students to listen for the instruments shown on the slide.
 - About the music: **Conga de Santiago** is a particular kind of Carnival music, unique to Santiago.
 - About the instruments:
 - Bottom Left: Trompeta China (Actually NOT a trumpet, but rather an oboe. Its piercing sound can be heard over the roar of the drums). It was probably brought to Cuba from China in the late 1800s.
 - Bottom Middle: Brake drums (struck with metal rods and used as bells for timekeeping and to play interlocking parts).
 - Bottom Right: Galleta (large bass drum, played with one hand and one stick).
 - Top Left: Hierro (single iron bell played with a stick).
 - Top Right: boku (conical drum played with hands - like a conga drum).

Slide 19: Carnival and Diaspora

Share Information:

- The communities we have learned about in this lesson so far extends to the US and other places like the UK—countries that have large populations of Puerto Ricans and other Caribbean peoples.
 - The Caribbean diaspora in the United States celebrates Carnival in many different cities.
 - As an example, the **West Indian Day Carnival** is celebrated on Labor Day in New York.
 - Note: Ray Allen documents diaspora Carnival traditions of New York in his book *Jump Up!: Caribbean Carnival Music in New York* (American Musicspheres).
 - The **Notting Hill Carnival**, celebrated in London England in August when the weather is favorable, brings together a diversity of Carnival traditions from the Caribbean and Latin America, namely Brazil.
 - With over 70 mas bands participating, costumes, Calypso Tents, samba batucadas (which we’ll learn about in Component 2), sound systems, street vendors and staged concerts it is considered one of Europe’s largest street parties.

Slide 20: Optional Activity: Mapping Carnival

Map Activity:

- Locate the different Carnival locations mentioned in this Component on a map. (Bonus points if students can also locate and label the cities we have discussed!)
 - Puerto Rico (Ponce)
 - Cuba (Santiago & Havana)
 - Dominican Republic
 - U.S. Virgin Islands (St. Croix)
 - Trinidad (and Tobago)
 - Venezuela (Naiguatá)
 - New Orleans, US
- Note: A printable copy of map worksheet is included at the end of this teacher's guide.

Slide 20.1: Optional Activity: Mapping Carnival

Map Activity Answer Key:

Optional Activity: Mapping Carnival

- Puerto Rico (Ponce)
- Cuba (Santiago & Havana)
- Dominican Republic
- U.S. Virgin Islands (St. Croix)
- Trinidad (and Tobago)
- Venezuela (Naiguatá)
- New Orleans, US

Caribbean and Central America Map, by Bruce Jones Design. World of Maps.

Slide 21: Lesson Component 1: Learning Checkpoint

- *What is Carnival and why is it significant to people in Latin America and the Caribbean?*
 - **Carnival is a popular festival tied to the Catholic religion that occurs just before the Lenten season. During Carnival, masked people fill the streets, provoking fun and laughter. Especially considering the colonial history of slavery and oppression in the Americas, Carnival in this region can be viewed as a form of resistance and celebration of**

resilience. It is also cathartic, involving rituals that represent cleansing/purification, liberation, and freedom.

- *What are some common elements of Carnival celebrations around the world?*
 - **Music and dancing, processions/parades, masks, costumes/characters, parties, and certain rituals - such as the coronation and deposition of the king, the burning of an effigy (Judas), and the burial of the sardine.**

- What are some music genres associated with Carnival in Latin America and the Caribbean?
 - **Calypso and soca (Trinidad), plena (Puerto Rico), parranda (Venezuela), quelbe (Virgin Islands), samba (Brazil), conga (Cuba), gagá (Dominican Republic).**

Slide 22: Lesson Navigation Slide

2. Component Two: Celebrating Carnival in Puerto Rico



To prepare:

- Read through the component.
- Preview the **Lesson 8, Component 2 Slideshow** (slides 23–40).
 - Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson landing page, *(If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow” link, which will not show the notes.)*

Slide 23: Component 2 Introduction Slide

Slide 24: What is Carnival?

Share Information:

- Especially if students did not complete Component 1, share some basic information about Carnival:
 - Carnival is a festivity that takes place in many countries around the world.
 - It is tied to the Catholic religion and occurs just before the Lenten season. Celebrations culminate around the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.
 - An example you might be familiar with is the celebration of Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) in New Orleans.
 - During Carnival, masked people fill the streets, provoking fun and laughter.
 - Dances, parties, and processions are common, as people abandon the routine of work life and turn to play and indulge in worldly pleasures.

Slide 25: Carnival in Puerto Rico: Beginnings

Share Information:

- Some of the first descriptions of Carnival in Puerto Rico date back to the 18th century.
 - Historical sources describe “Carnestolendas” (synonym of Carnival) as **extravagant city festivals** that involved **masks** and **fireworks**, people **dancing** on the street, others playing **pranks** (e.g., throwing rotten eggs at bystanders).
 - **Carnival parades and processions were a form of public theater.**
 - *Comparsas* (mobile floats) represented allegorical themes—some mythological, historical, exotic—others a parody of current events.
 - Different groups would parade through the streets, dressed up according to specific themes (e.g., Turkish theme with turbans and capes, gladiators of Rome, Seamen and mariners).

Slide 26: Carnival in Puerto Rico: Today

A. Share Information:

- Today, Carnivals are celebrated all over the island: Arroyo, Guayama, Rio Grande, Vieques, Ponce (and many others).
 - The southern city of Ponce boasts one of the oldest carnivals (around 163 years old) and is the biggest of such festivals in Puerto Rico, attracting many delegations (marching bands, dance troupes, floats) and comparsas from all over the island (sometimes from other islands/countries as well). Since this event is so well-known, it also attracts many local and international tourists.
 - **The Ponce Carnival** is structured around a series of parades and public events including the **Rey Momo parade** (parade of kings and queens at the start of Carnival). The culmination of Carnival is the **Burial of the Sardine** on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, and the **burning of an effigy** (Judas).
 - The sardine represents the abstinence and solemnity of the upcoming Lenten season.
 - The burning of an effigy (Judas) symbolizes cleansing/purification/renewal.

B. Watch Video (Optional):

- Especially if students did not complete Component 1, click on the embedded link to watch a bit of the 2020 Ponce Carnival celebration:
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/72Weq>.

Slide 27: The Spirit of Carnival

Share Information:

- Though all social classes participate in Carnival, it is primarily a popular expression of the working classes and Black communities.
 - Carnival in Puerto Rico, as in other places in the Caribbean, is a reaffirmation of African and Afro-Caribbean heritage.
 - During Carnival celebrations, African music, dance, food, ritual and mask traditions are recreated and celebrated.

Slide 28: Vejigantes

Share Information:

- The main protagonists of Carnival in Puerto Rico are the **vejigantes**—devil-like tricksters who roam the streets in groups playing pranks on bystanders and spectators.
 - The word *vejiga* means bladder. Vejigantes often throw balloons filled with water at bystanders (representing bladders).

- Vejigantes wear colorful masks with horns and a jump suit. Sometimes, the masks are accentuated with grotesque features (e.g., mouth, teeth, tongue, snout).
 - In Ponce, vejigante masks are made of paper maché. (If you completed Lesson 6, you might remember the Loíza vejigante masks are made of coconut husk.)
- Advance through the next two slides to view more photographs of vejigante masks/costumes.

Slide 29: Vejigantes

View Images:

- Left: Traditional vejigante mask
- Middle: Black and white photo of a vejigante on the street at the Ponce Carnival in the 1980s
- Right: Traditional vejigante costume (jumpsuit)

Slide 30: Vejigantes

View Images:

- Left: Vejigante mask – the presence of these characters during Carnival is understood by many as a reference to the contest between good and evil.
- Middle: Black and white photo of a child wearing a vejigante mask at the Ponce Carnival in the 1980s
- Right: Carnival mask, made in Ponce around 1980s. Red and black are the colors of Ponce.

Slide 31: The Chaos of Carnival

Share Information:

- During Carnival the world is upside down: All rules, inhibitions, restrictions, regulations, and hierarchy that determine the course of everyday life are suspended. Loud music, fireworks and crowds fill the streets.
- In addition to Carnival vejigantes roaming the streets playing pranks on people, many other characters make appearances.
 - For example, “**Loca**” (usually men dressed up as women who entertain bystanders), “**Viejo**” (symbolizes “European values”), and “**Rey Momo**” (The King of Carnival, a character derived from Greek mythology. Rey Momo personifies satire and mockery).

Slide 32: Smaller Carnival Celebrations in Puerto Rico

Share Information:

- Throughout Puerto Rico (and the Caribbean region) there are also many smaller community Carnival celebrations.

- For example, the community of Ponce Playa celebrates its own festival called **Carnaval de Vejigantes de Playa de Ponce**.
 - Ponce Playa is a smaller community/neighborhood in the southernmost part of Ponce (one of 31 barrios within the city limits). It is largely a community comprised of fisherman and marginalized groups.
- Compared to the much larger Carnival de Ponce, Ponce Playa’s Carnival is a much smaller community festival.
 - Programming is more community-minded. Activities include mask-making and music/dance workshops for the public. Comparsas (mobile floats) and music and dance (plena) performances are prepared well in advance.
 - Eventually, however, most of the festivities at these peripheral/rural/barrio celebrations merge with the larger city festivals.
 - Whether it be in a larger city, a smaller community, or rural context, Carnival celebrations have history of uniting and bringing people together.
 - Carnival promotes socialization between different social classes, and celebrations unite people of different racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds.

Slide 33: Carnival Music in Puerto Rico: Plena

A. Share Information:

- **Plena** is Puerto Rico’s predominant Carnival music.
 - It’s a mobile music that can played while parading through the streets.
 - The main instruments are frame drums of different sizes called *panderos*, which play interlocking parts (different rhythmic parts alternate with each other to form a complete rhythmic line).
 - Note: Learn all about plena music (and play it) in Lesson 4 of this Learning Pathway!

B. Attentive Listening:

- Listen to “Maringracia”, by Viento de Agua (group led by Tito Matos).
 - Listen for the rhythms played by panderos. *Can you hear how they interlock? Do you think this is good music for a procession/parade? Why? (It is easy to march down the street while holding/playing this type of drum. The music itself has a strong steady beat [good for marching] and the lyrics are repetitive [call and response form]. This makes it easy for spectators to join in and participate in the performance.)*
 - Note: The song mentions Ponce and Loiza Aldea—two focal centers for Afro Puerto Rican culture. In addition to being home to Puerto Rico’s largest Carnival, Ponce is considered the birthplace of plena.
 - Additional note about the music (especially relevant in music classrooms): Notice the allusion to Carnival in the middle of the song the group breaks into a samba carnivalesque music (popular in Brazil). Viento de agua is known for

- innovating and fusing Puerto Rican rhythms (plena bomba) with other Afro Latin beats.
- Optional engaged listening: If you'd like to sing along with the "response", the lyrics are:
 - Tu plena es buena, Maringracia, tu plena es buena.
 - Translation: Your plena is good, Maringracia, your plena is good (probably a shortened form of the name Maria en Gracia).
 - Click the down arrow for an optional music-making activity!

Slide 33.1: Optional: Play Plena

Engaged and Enactive Listening (Performing Music):

- Learn the basic plena rhythmic groove shown below using body percussion (even though the notation is provided, consider teaching it by ear).
- Add instruments (substitute with different sizes of hand drums and different kinds of scrapers if necessary).
 - Note: The *requinto* is the smallest pandero and highest in sound. The *segundo* is the middle size, and the *seguidor* is the largest and lowest.

The image shows musical notation for the plena rhythmic groove, consisting of four staves: Guiro, Requito, Segunda, and Seguidor. All staves are in 4/4 time. The Guiro staff features a repeating pattern of eighth notes with accents. The Requito staff has a pattern of quarter notes with accents. The Segunda staff has a pattern of quarter notes with accents. The Seguidor staff has a pattern of quarter notes with accents.

Plena rhythmic groove notated by Karen Howard.

Slide 34: Brazilian Carnival Music in Puerto Rico

A. Share Information:

- Brazilian Carnival music has also made its way into Puerto Rican festivals.
 - Batucada is a African-influenced, percussion-based style of festive music that originated in Brazil (it is the "sound" of Carnival in Brazil). Batucada is characterized by its fast pace and repetitive style. It utilizes a wide variety of percussive sounds (e.g., different types of drums, scrapers, shakers, and whistles).

- Many musicians in Puerto Rico have even blended plena with batucada to create a musical form known as *batuplena*.

B. Watch Video:

- In the embedded video, David Marcano plays batuplena.
 - *Can you hear how the rhythms played on different instruments come together to interlock?*
 - Optional engaged listening: Have students clap along with different parts of the plena rhythm in the video.

Slide 35: Other “Masked” Occasions in Puerto Rico

Share Information:

- Not all festivals in Puerto Rico that feature masks, music, and revelry occur during the Carnival season.
 - For example, vejigante masks are also an important part of the **Santiago Apóstol Festival in Loíza**, which is celebrated at the end of July.
 - Note: Learn all about this fiesta in Lesson 6.
 - **Fiestas de Calle San Sebastian**, Puerto Rico’s largest street festival, is celebrated in San Juan during the third week of January. This event brings together local artisans, parades, street vendors, stage concerts and ad hoc plena groups. Though not a Carnival per se, the atmosphere of Carnival permeates the four days of fiesta.
 - Optional: Watch a video that shows Fiestas de Calle San Sebastian [HERE](#).
- Optional discussion: *What other fiestas, events or holidays can you think of that use masks, costumes, face painting, and other theatrical elements?* (**Hints: Halloween, Día de los Muertos, Parades, Puerto Rican Day Parade New York, etc.**)
- More connections to explore (optional):
 - In the Bahamas, **Junkanoo** is celebrated the day after Christmas (Boxing Day) and New Years. “Junkanoo is a masquerade tradition that draws on The Bahamas' West African ancestral roots and is a public celebration of Bahamian identity and artistic expression” (from Smithsonian Folkways liner notes).
 - Watch a Smithsonian Folkways video about Bahamian Junkanoo [HERE](#).
 - **National Puerto Rican Day** parades often boast floats with vejigantes, plena, and bomba.

Slide 36: Communities Unite through Carnival

Share Information:

- The Ponce Carnival is just one example of the broader Caribbean Carnival tradition.

- In a way, the Caribbean region can be viewed as a **community** united by a “Carnival culture”, which shares traditions related to music, rituals, masks, and food.
- To name a few examples:
 - Many **masks** from other Caribbean islands show striking similarities to vejigantes of Ponce (e.g., the cachúa from the Dominican Republic – pictured on the slide). Other masked characters (e.g., “Loca”, “Viejo”) have counterparts on other islands as well.
 - Certain **rituals** occur in many places around the region (e.g., the opening parade and coronation and deposition of the King or Queen, the burial of the Sardine, the burning of an effigy.)
 - **Music genres** across the region have certain similarities (e.g., instrumentation, African influences) and certain genres have become very popular all over the region (e.g., calypso).
- For a sneak peak of Component 3 (which focuses on calypso music), listen to a recording of a steel band (a tradition native to Trinidad) from St. Croix (Virgin Islands) playing a calypso (also native to Trinidad) in San Juan, Puerto Rico (“Island in the Sun”, performed by The Invaders Steel Band of St. Croix).

Slide 37: Creative Activity Option 1: Make a Mask

Explain Directions:

- Encourage students to complete a creative activity to synthesize their learning from this Component.
 - **Option 1** (directions on this slide): Make a Mask (for students who prefer visual art connections).
 - **Option 2** (directions on the next slide): Create music (for students who prefer music/performing arts connections).
- Find directions to make your own vejigante mask [HERE](#) (an activity from the National Museum of American History).
 - Note: The attached mask-making activity from the National Museum of American History was also suggested as an optional activity in Lesson 6 of this Learning Pathway. If you don’t have time to make a paper maché mask, keep it simple. Some masks are traditionally made of cardboard. Use the pictured Viejo masks as inspiration.
- Optional extension: Design your own dress/costume to go along with your mask. Find directions to design your costume [HERE](#) (an activity from the National Museum of American History).
- Optional Extension: Plan a class "vejigante parade". Have students partner with students who choose option 2 (creating music), for an even more meaningful experience! Students who choose option 1 can model their masks/costumes while students who choose option 2 play their music.

Slide 38: Creative Activity Option 2: Create Music

Explain Directions:

- Option 2: Create music.
 - Traditional chants in call and response often announce vejigantes as they march through the parades. They are usually sung to the rhythm of plena.
 1. Practice the plena rhythm shown on the slide (substituting instruments if necessary).
 2. Create and practice your own rhythm using this chant (one student can perform the "call" while others perform the "response". Repeat it several times.
 - Call: *Vejigante a la bolla* (The name of Puerto Rico's Carnival tradition).
 - Response: *Pan y cebolla* (Bread and onion)
 3. Add these additional verses:
 - Call: *Toco toco toco toco* (I play)
 - Response: *Vejigante come coco* (The vejigante eats coconut)
 - Call: *Prucutá Prucutá* (a type of food?)
 - Response: *Y bueno que esta* (and it is good).
 4. Put it all together. Some students can play the plena rhythmic base, while others sing call and response.
- Optional extension: Plan a class "vejigante parade." Have students partner with students who choose option 1 (making a mask), for an even more meaningful experience! Students who choose option 1 can model their masks/costumes while students who choose option 2 can "announce" the vejigantes by performing their music.

Slide 39: Learning Checkpoint

- *What are vejigantes and what is their role in the Puerto Rico Carnival tradition?*
 - **The main protagonists of Carnival in Puerto Rico are the vejigantes—devil-like trickster characters who roam the streets in groups playing pranks on bystanders and spectators (e.g., throwing water balloons). Many people dress up as vejigantes during the celebrations, wearing colorful masks with horns (sometimes accentuated with grotesque features) and a jump suit.**
- *What is the predominant music genre associated with Carnival in Puerto Rico?*
 - **Plena, which is very mobile. The main instruments are frame drums of different sizes called panderos.**
- *Why can the Caribbean region be viewed as a community united by "Carnival culture"?*

- **Many places in the region share Carnival traditions related to things like music, rituals, masks, and food. Masks from other Caribbean islands show striking similarities to vejigantes of Ponce. Certain rituals occur in many places (e.g., the burial of the sardine). Musical genres share certain similarities (e.g., instrumentation, African influences) and certain genres have become popular all over the region (e.g., calypso).**

Slide 40: Lesson Navigation Slide

3. Component Three: Calypso: Connecting Communities

To prepare:

- Read through the component.
- Preview the **Lesson 8, Component 2 Slideshow** (slides 41–57).
 - Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson landing page, (If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow” link, which will not show the notes).
- Print out a Composing Calypso worksheet for each student (find below).
- Optional: Print and cut out several copies of the song structure flashcards (find below).



Slide 41: Component 3 Introduction Slide

Slide 42: What is Carnival?

Share Information:

- Especially if students did not complete Component 1 or Component 2, share some basic information about Carnival:
 - *Carnival* is a festivity that takes place in many countries around the world.
 - It is tied to the Catholic religion and occurs just before the Lenten season. Celebrations culminate around the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.
 - An example you might be familiar with is the celebration of Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) in New Orleans.
 - During Carnival, masked people fill the streets, provoking fun and laughter.
 - Dances, parties, and processions are common, as people abandon the routine of work life and turn to play and indulge in worldly pleasures.

Slide 43.1: Where is Trinidad?

Share Information and Study Map:

- Trinidad boasts the largest Carnival celebration in the Caribbean.
- **Can you locate Trinidad on the map? (Click the down arrow to see the map with Trinidad circled.)**

Slide 43.2: Trinidad and Tobago

Share Information and Study Map:

- The island of Trinidad is located under 7 miles off the coast of northeastern Venezuela.
- Together, Trinidad and neighboring island Tobago (northeast) form a twin island nation.

Slide 44: Carnival in Trinidad: Jump Up!

A. Share Information:

- During Carnival in Trinidad, music brings parades to life, moving masses of revelers through the streets of Port of Spain.
- Additional contextual information that you might choose to share with students:
 - **The following excerpt comes from the [Carnival Land Website](#), a platform that promotes Carnival festivals all over the world:** “When it comes to celebrating carnival in Trinidad and Tobago you can either just be a spectator and watch the parades, or you can join in! When you choose to join in it is called *playing mas*. For those not familiar with Carnival in the Caribbean, if you want to “play mas” you have to join a masquerade band. It isn’t possible to just show up in a beautiful home-made costume and join the parade. You must select a mas band you want to be part of, wear their costumes and dance through the streets with your chosen band. To have the best time at carnival in Trinidad and Tobago don’t just be a spectator! Absolutely find a *mas* band that you want to be part of, then sign up and join the party!”
 - **The following excerpt comes from the [West Indian American Day Carnival Association Website](#):** “MAS’ is the shortened form of the word ‘MASQUERADE’. The event of Mas goes back to the days of slavery, when on the plantation the Lords and Ladies would gather to have Masquerade Balls. One such event among the French colonials was Mardi Gras. The slaves derived their own version of this gathering to mimic their owners. These portrayals are what are known today as “Traditional Mas”.
 - The persons gathering in a group referred to as ‘The Band’ are ‘Masqueraders’. Dressed in ‘costumes’ some often based with a wire framework decorated with fabric, beads, feathers and material of bright regality, depict a theme created by a designer. Themes are often represented by characters dressed to portray or capture the story. There are often ‘sections’ which capture various aspects of the theme.
 - Mas Bands can be as small as just a few characters to as large as hundreds of persons dressed in costumes/character. Some bands have large portrayals which are referred to as ‘King’, ‘Queen’ or ‘Individuals’. These are usually magnificently designed and are often a sight to behold for the spectators.”

B. Attentive Listening:

- To get at a sense of the sounds of Trinidad's Carnival, listen to the embedded track (recorded live during a parade in Port of Spain, Trinidad in 1956).

- *What sounds do you hear? (People talking/laughing/cheering/having fun, shakers and other percussion instruments, steel drums, wind/brass instruments [saxophones/trumpets]).*

Slide 45: Attentive and Engaged Listening: What is *Calypso*?

A. Share Information:

- In the Caribbean, *calypso* is the music style most associated with Carnival.
 - Calypso emerged in the 18th century among communities of enslaved Africans.
 - Over time, it evolved from a combination of cultural influences (e.g., French, English, Spanish, African).
 - Calypso music is characterized by **upbeat, syncopated rhythms** and **interesting song lyrics**, which often consist of a narrative, or **tell a story**.
 - Since the form of a calypso is often related to the text (which **tends to follow a verse/chorus pattern**) – the musical form can often be classified as AB or AABB.
- Today, calypso remains very important to the people of Trinidad. Some people even call it Trinidad and Tobago's national music.

B. Attentive Listening:

- Play some excerpts from “Reply to Melody”, performed by Mighty Sparrow. Listen for:
 - Lyrics that tell a story
 - Note: Students might note the lyrics of this song seem a bit insulting. Advance to the next slide to learn more.
 - Upbeat/danceable feel
 - Syncopated rhythms
 - Two-part structure (verse/chorus)

C. Engaged Listening:

- Teach the rhythms notated on the slide (commonly associated with calypso music).
- Play the track again. This time, clap these rhythms as you listen.

Slide 46: Calypso Kings: Mighty Sparrow and Lord Melody

Share Information:

- Calypso singers are the stars of Carnival! (They are sometimes called *calypsonians*.)
 - The lyrics of the songs sung by these charismatic performers are often witty and satirical, and sometimes political in nature.
 - In the song you just heard, Mighty Sparrow is responding to Lord Melody (hence the title, "Reply to Melody"). This is just one of a series of recorded responses

between the two musicians, who kept up a running calypso duel for years - poking fun at each other.

- Through these ongoing recorded conversations, Mighty Sparrow and Lord Melody adapted an old tradition called *picong*, in which calypso singers trade improvised insults through song (in a friendly manner, most of the time).
 - Now that you know the story, you might want to go back and listen to the song again!

Slide 47: Integrating Context: Calypso Tents

Share Information and Optional Listening:

- During Carnival, nightly live music performances featuring calypso calypsonians take place in ***calypso tents***. A single performance often features more than ten performers.
 - Early on, these were actually "tents"—temporary structures erected specifically for carnival. Today, what is called a calypso "tent" is often a more permanent structure (e.g., theater or auditorium).
 - Although the physical layout changes from one event to the next, they generally feature a raised stage that faces a seated audience.
 - There is usually a house band and a master of ceremonies, who introduces the singers and tells jokes between acts.
 - Performers like Lord Melody and Mighty Sparrow would sometimes engage in live duels (*picong*) in these calypso tents during Carnival - hurling "extemporaneous mutual insults" through the lyrics of their songs - much to the delight of audience members, who attended these performances in hopes they would have many opportunities to laugh. Although audience members do get up to dance from time to time, the focus of "tent" performances is the song lyrics and how they are delivered by the performer.
- If time allows, listen to a live performance by Lord Melody in 1956, recorded in a calypso tent at the Port of Spain Carnival in front of an audience of about 1000 people.

Slide 48: Attentive Listening: Steelbands

A. Share Information:

- Calypsos are commonly played by ***steelbands*** - a type of musical ensemble born in Trinidad. ***Steelpans*** (aka ***steel drums***) are typically made from recycled oil barrels.
 - Note: This Lesson Component focuses on calypso. ***Soca*** is another type of music commonly played by steelbands. Soca is considered a sub-genre of calypso - it emerged later (1970s). It has a faster tempo, uses more electronic sounds, and incorporates rhythms from East India.
- A brief history of the steelpan/steel drum tradition from Trinidad:

- The very first innovators of the steelpan (aka steel drum) tradition were mostly young men living in urban areas of Trinidad. Around the time of World War II, Carnival approaching and the popular bamboo "stick bands" of the time had been banned. They found themselves with a need for rhythmic accompaniment and decided to raid the junkyard to find it. The earliest steel drums were made from any type of metal container that could be tuned to create pitches by denting it – for example, an empty paint can or a biscuit/cookie tin. Eventually, the 55-gallon oil barrel became standard material for steelpans, because they were widely available and discarded due to the local oil industry in Trinidad and Tobago. The irons and scrapers used in the ensemble were often recycled metal car and truck parts – such as brake drums (pictured on this slide).

B. Attentive Listening:

- Listen to an example of calypso played by a steelband.
 - *What instruments do you hear?* (**Hints: steelpans/steel drums of various sizes, brake drum/cowbell, maracas/shaker, sticks**).
 - Interesting information about the track: This was recorded by a group of 12-year-old boys in New York City in 1959—only several months after they started practicing!

Slide 49: Integrating Context: Calypso is Everywhere!

Share Information:

- Over time, calypso music travelled. It is now played all over the Caribbean—with each island giving this music its own unique flavor.
 - It is very much associated with Carnival and shows up in parades and celebrations throughout the region.

Slide 50.1: Calypso Connects Communities: Vieques

Share Information:

- In Puerto Rico, one can hear calypso at the **Carnival of Vieques**.
 - Vieques is a small island off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico. Its people, culture and traditions have strong ties to both the Puerto Rico and the Eastern Caribbean, especially St Croix and the neighboring Virgin Islands.
 - Carnival in Vieques is celebrated in July.
- Optional: Watch a [documentary about the Vieques Carnival](#) (and calypso in Puerto Rico). It is approximately 13 minutes long.
- Optional: Click the down arrow to listen to calypsos recorded by Will Colon and Vieques Calypso Brass.

Slide 50.2: Optional Videos: Vieques Calypso Brass

Watch Videos:

- Watch/Listen to Will Colon and Vieques Calypso Brass play:
 - [“My Donkey”](#) (performing on a Puerto Rican television show in 1986)
 - [“Tiny Whiney”](#) (same television show performance)

Slide 51: Calypso Connects Communities: Loíza

Share Information:

- Calypso also forms part of the **Fiesta de Santiago Apóstol de Loíza**.
 - Local Loíza bands perform calypso music on steelpans.
 - Notably, the iconic Carreton Alegre (Happy Cart) blasts calypso music from loudspeakers during parades, which incites the vejigantes and revelers to dance.
 - Note: *Vejigantes* are devil-like trickster characters who roam the streets in groups playing pranks on bystanders and spectators during the fiesta. Learn all about the Fiesta de Santiago Apóstol de Loíza in Lesson 6 of this Learning Pathway.

Slide 52: Engaged Listening: Calypso Time and Rhythm

Engaged Listening:

- Let's return to "Boo Boo Calypso", recorded by Kim Loy Wong and his Wiltwyck Steel Band. While listening to excerpts from the track:
 1. Move around the room, stepping on the steady beat.
 2. Silently snap along with the shakers.
 3. Do #1 and #2 at the same time.
 4. Clap along with the break drum.
 5. Pat the common syncopated calypso pattern you learned earlier.
 6. Improvise your own pattern (tap it on your lap or quietly on your desk/table).

Slide 53: Attentive Listening: Calypso Chords and Song Structure

Attentive Listening:

- Listen to the recording again.
 - *Can you identify the song's structure* (the different sections of the song)? **Hint: They are all listed on the slide.**
 - Optional: A set of flashcards for this activity is available below. Print and cut out several sets of cards ahead of time. In small groups, students can try to put the cards in the right order as they listen.
 - Note: Determining song structure is always a bit subjective. **One possible "answer" for this activity is:**
 - Introduction: Groove introduced; Verse (A); Call and Response; Chorus (B); Interlude (Groove); Rhythmic improvisation; Verse (A); Call and

Response; Chorus (B); Interlude (Groove); Melodic Improvisation; Ending (Groove)

- Listen again.
 - *Can you identify the repeating chord pattern?* (Raise 1 finger for "I", 4 fingers for "IV", and 5 fingers for "V".)
 - The chord pattern (very common in calypso): **I, IV, I, V**

Slide 54: Engaged and Enactive Listening: A Calypso Groove

A. Engaged Listening:

- While listening to excerpts from the audio track, use body percussion to practice each rhythmic line individually (shown in the diagram below and on the slide).
- While listening to the audio track, play this calypso groove as a group (assigning students to different parts, using body percussion or rhythm instruments).

B. Enactive Listening:

- Using body percussion or rhythm instruments, perform this calypso groove without the recording.
- Add the pitches/chords. If you don't have steel drums, use other instruments to outline the chord progressions (e.g., keyboard/piano, bass, marimba, xylophone, ukuleles, etc.). You could even transcribe the melodic/harmonic lines for band instruments.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of five staves. The top staff is for Steel Drums in treble clef, showing a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The second staff is for Steel Drums 1 in bass clef, showing a harmonic line with chords and rests. The third staff is for Steel Drums 2 in bass clef, showing a harmonic line with chords and rests. The fourth staff is for Maracas, showing a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The fifth staff is for Brake Drum, showing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Rhythmic groove created by Pete Seeger and included in a Smithsonian Folkways lesson plan by Sarah J. Bartolome. Find the original version in the liner notes for [Kim Loy Wong and His Wiltwyck Steel Band](#).

Slide 55: Creating Calypso

Creating World Music:

- Using what they have learned in this component, students can create their own short song—inspired by calypso!
 - A worksheet is provided for this activity (find below), which will help students organize their thoughts as they compose, practice, revise, refine, and perform.
 - You will notice this worksheet outlines certain parameters for the composition, to help students be successful.
 - Feel free to use this resource "as is" or adapt it to better meet the needs of you students based on their musical background and level of experience.

Slide 56: Learning Checkpoint

- *Why does calypso serve as a symbol of connection in the Caribbean region?*
 - **In a way, the Caribbean region can be viewed as a community united by a “Carnival culture”, which shares traditions related to music, rituals, masks, and food. Certain aspects of the celebration are similar throughout the region (e.g., parades/processions, costumes, dancing, music performances). Music genres have similar instrumentation (e.g., drums/percussion), characteristics (e.g., syncopation), and influences (e.g., African). Certain musical styles have become popular all over the region (e.g., calypso).**
- *What are some important musical features of calypso music?*
 - **Calypso music is characterized by upbeat, syncopated rhythms and interesting song lyrics (sung by charismatic calypsonians), which often consist of a narrative, or tell a story. Since the form of a calypso is often related to the text (which tends to follow a verse/chorus pattern) – the musical form can often be classified as AB or AABB. In Trinidad (and throughout the Caribbean), calypsos are frequently performed by steelbands.**
- What were some rewarding and challenging aspects of creating and performing calypso music? **(Answers will vary.)**

Slide 57: Lesson Navigation Slide

2014 National Music Standards Connections

MU:Cr1.1.E.Ia Compose and improvise ideas for melodies, rhythmic passages, and arrangements for specific purposes that reflect characteristic(s) of music from a variety of historical periods studied in rehearsal.

- After repeated attentive listening, students will compose and improvise musical ideas, using chord progressions, rhythmic patterns, and melodic riffs that are common in calypso music.
- After repeated attentive listening, students will compose and improvise ideas for a call and response chant that could be performed to the rhythm of plena.

MU:Cr2.1.E.Ia Select and develop draft melodies, rhythmic passages, and arrangements for specific purposes that demonstrate understanding of characteristic(s) of music from a variety of historical periods studied in rehearsal.

- Students will draw from their drafted rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic ideas to create a 16-bar song that embodies the common characteristics of calypso music.

MU:Cr2.1.E.Ib Preserve draft compositions and improvisations through standard notation and audio recording.

- Students will use standard written notation to preserve drafts of their calypso compositions.

MU:Cr3.1.E.Ia Evaluate and refine draft melodies, rhythmic passages, arrangements, and improvisations based on established criteria, including the extent to which they address identified purposes.

- Students will refine their calypso compositions based on teacher and peer feedback and create a final draft.

MU:Cr3.2.E.Ia Share personally-developed melodies, rhythmic passages, and arrangements – individually or as an ensemble – that address identified purposes.

- Students will practice and perform the calypso songs they compose.

MU:Pr4.2.E.Ia Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how compositional devices employed and theoretical and structural aspects of musical works impact and inform prepared or improvised performances.

- Students will demonstrate rhythms associated with plena.
- Students will demonstrate rhythms and harmonic progressions associated with calypso.
- Students will identify the structure/form of a calypso song.

MU:Re7.2.E.Ia Explain how the analysis of passages and understanding the way the elements of music are manipulated inform the response to music.

- Students will identify instruments associated with plena and calypso music.
- Students will identify important musical characteristics associated with plena and calypso music (e.g., interlocking parts, syncopation, chord progressions, call and response, structure/form).

MU:Re8.1.E.Ia Explain and support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, (when appropriate) the setting of the text, and personal research.

- Students will explain the expressive intent of calypsonians when they engage in picong.
- Students will explain the purpose of plena and calypso music within the context of Carnival.
- Students will identify different contexts within which music is played during Carnival.

MU:Cn10.o.H.Ia Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.

- Students will explain why performers choose to play certain musical styles within the context of Carnival.
- Students will identify the purpose(s) and common topics of calypso songs.
- Students will make creative choices based on interests, knowledge, and skills as they compose their own short song “in the style of” calypso.

MU:Cn11.o.T.Ia Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

- Students will explain the history, influences, and purposes of Carnival celebrations in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, and Latin America.
- Students will describe the “Carnival atmosphere”.
- Students will explain the role(s) of music within the context of Carnival celebrations.
- Students will identify music genres commonly associated with Carnival in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, and Latin America.
- Students will explain why Carnival serves as a symbol of connection in the Caribbean.
- Students will find the location of important Carnival celebrations on a map of the Caribbean and Latin America.
- Students will explain the role of vejigantes in the Puerto Rican Carnival tradition.
- Students will create their own vejigante mask.
- Students will identify to important calypsonians from Trinidad.

- Students will explain the context within which calypsos are performed during Carnival.
- Students will explain where, why, and how the steelpan/steelband/steel drum tradition originated.

Additional Reading and Resources

Allen, Ray. 2019. *Jump Up!: Caribbean Carnival Music in New York City*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bartolome, Sarah. n.d. “Steel Band Style, Calypso Culture and Childhood Chants: Trinidadian Music for the Classroom” (lesson plan). *Smithsonian Folkways Recordings*.
https://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/docs/lesson_plans/FLP10017_trinidad_steelband_long.pdf.

Carnivaland. n.d. “Trinidad & Tobago Carnival.” Accessed September 5, 2023.
<https://www.carnivaland.net/trinidad-and-tobago-carnival/>.

Cook, Emory. 1957. Liner Notes for “Calypso Kings and Pink Gin.” Cook Records COOK01185. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/COOK01185.pdf>.

Dudley, Shannon. 2008. *Carnival Music in Trinidad: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.

García Carbó, Carlos. 2011. “Sardina de Naiguatá: Afro-Venezuelan Music.” Liner Notes for La Sardina de Naiguatá. *iParranda! Venezuelan Carnival Music*. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings SFW40558. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/SFW40558.pdf>.

Howard, Karen. 2019. “Puerto Rican *Plena*: The Power of a Song.” *General Music Today* 32, no. 2: 36–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371318809971>.

National Carnival Commission of Trinidad and Tobago. n.d. “Home.” Accessed September 5, 2023. <https://www.ncctt.org/new/>.

Notting Hill Carnival. n.d. “Brazilian Bands.” Accessed September 5, 2023.
<https://nhcarnival.org/carnival-info/brazilian-bands>.

Repeating Islands. 2009. “Easter Marks End of Gagá Festivities in Dominican Republic.” Accessed September 5, 2023.
<https://repeatingislands.com/2009/04/13/easter-marks-end-of-gaga-festivities-in-dominican-republic/>.

- Rohlehr, Gordon. 2005. Liner Notes for “First Flight: Early Calypsos of the Mighty Sparrow. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings SFW40534. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/SFW40534.pdf>.
- Schloss, Andrew. 1981. “History of Carnival and of Santiago de Cuba.” Liner Notes for *Carnaval in Cuba*. Folkways Records FW04065. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/FW04065.pdf>.
- Seeger, Pete. 1959. “The Steel Drum: A New Folk Instrument.” Liner Notes for *Kim Loy Wong and His Wiltwyck Steel Band*. Folkways Records FW03834. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/FW03834.pdf>.
- Sheehy, Daniel E. 2016. “Introduction.” Liner Notes for *Quelbe! Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights*. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings SFW40568. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/SFW40568.pdf>.
- Silent Bx. “San Sabastian Street Festival 2016: The Party of the Year.” 2016. YouTube video, June 5, 2016, 9:12. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Co1Yk-zPdOk>.
- Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Behring Center. 2002. “How to Dress for the Ponce Carnival” (educational resource). Accessed September 5, 2023. https://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/puerto/carnival_dress.pdf.
- Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Behring Center. 2002. “Make Your Own Carnival Mask” (educational resource). Accessed September 5, 2023. https://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/puerto/carnival_mask.pdf.
- Villarini, Nadjah Rios. “Vieques, manos arriba: Calypso Documentary.” 2014. The Diaspora Project, in collaboration with the University of Puerto Rico. YouTube video, 13:44. Uploaded by Sirsaca, May 16, 2020. https://youtu.be/Nl2Xn1rn2w?si=ltAc5L_1tFwuzuFJ.
- West Indian American Day Carnival Association. n.d. “NY Carnival.” Accessed September 5, 2023. <https://wiadcacarnival.org/nycarnival.html>.
- Wood, Katie. n.d. “Catch the Calypso Beat and Put it in Your Feet!” (lesson plan). *Smithsonian Folkways Recordings*. https://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/docs/lesson_plans/FLP10072_caribbean_calypso_beat.pdf.

Worksheets

Mapping Carnival Activity: Printable Map



This royalty free image can be used for personal, corporate or education projects. It cannot be resold or freely distributed. For an edited version of this map, please visit www.bjdesign.com or www.mapsfordesign.com. © Bruce Jones Design, Inc. 2011.

© 2023 Smithsonian Institution. Personal, educational, and non-commercial uses allowed; commercial rights reserved. See Smithsonian [terms of use](#) for more information.

FOLKWAYS

**Introduction
(Groove
Introduced)**

Verse (A)

**Call and
Response**

**Interlude
(Groove)**

FOLKWAYS

**Ending
(Groove)**

Chorus (B)

**Call and
Response**

**Rhythmic
Improvisation**

FOLKWAYS

**Interlude
(Groove)**

Verse (A)

Chorus (B)

**Melodic
Improvisation**

FOLKWAYS

Calypso Composition Activity

Name: _____

Instructions:

1. Review the three chords we have been working with:
I (Key of C = C, E, G; Key of Bflat = Bflat, D, F; Key of G = G, B, D)
IV (Key of C = F, A, C; Key of Bflat = Eflat, G, Bflat; Key of G = C, E, G)
V (Key of C = G, B, D; Key of Bflat = F, A, C; Key of G = D, Fsharp, A)
2. Next, with these chords, explore the three rhythmic choices you will have for this assignment.

Rhythm choice 1:



Rhythm choice 2:



Rhythm choice 3:



3. Document your 8-measure chord progression for Section 1 of your song in the space provided below (remember, many songs written for steel drums begin and end with the I chord).

-
4. Next, write your rhythmic pattern for Section 1 (remember, you could choose one rhythmic pattern for the whole section, or you can choose to mix it up in logical and creative ways).

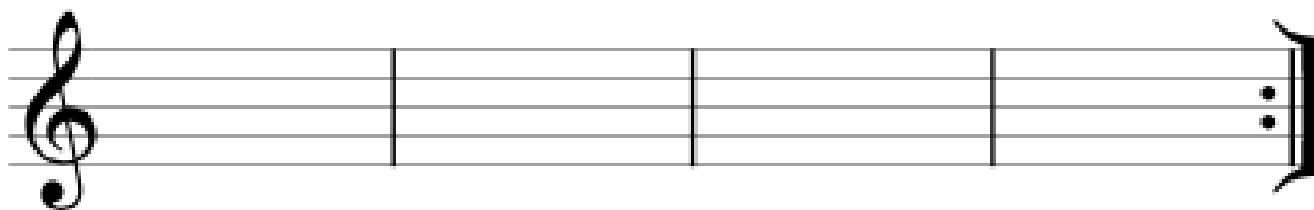
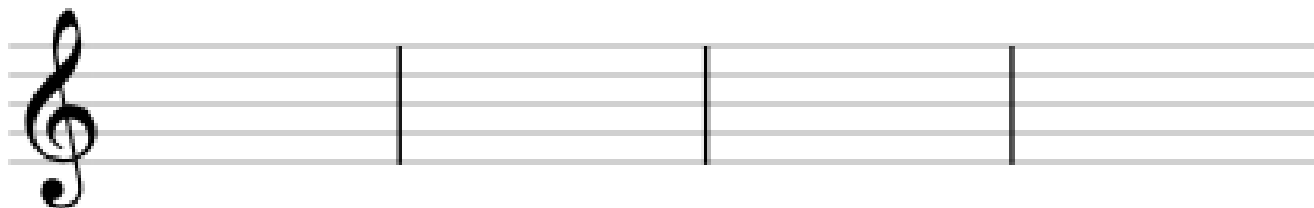
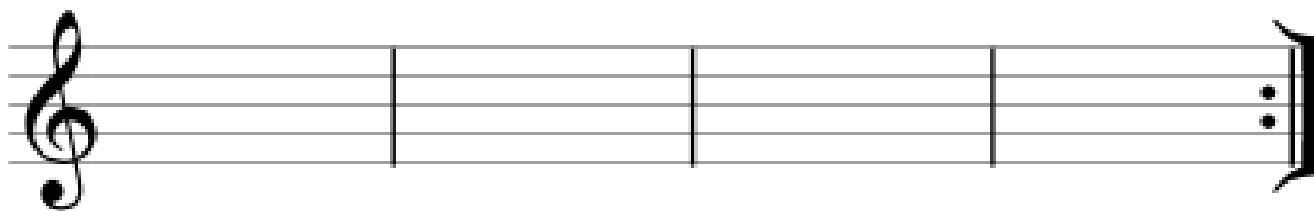
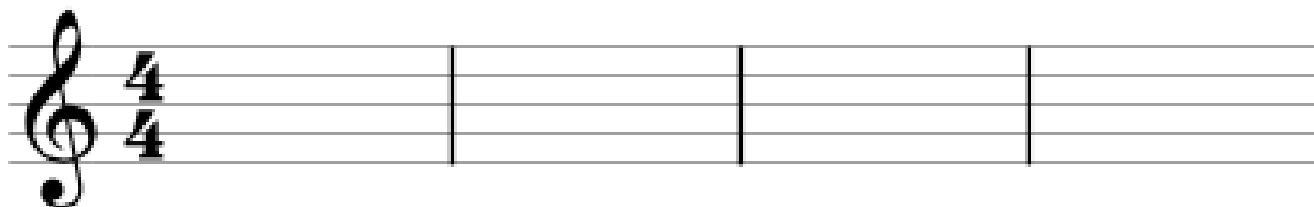


5. Now, write your 8-measure chord progression (chord names) for Section 2 in the spaces provided below.

-
6. Write your rhythmic pattern for Section 2 below.



7. Put it all together! On the staff below, document your final composition. Place the notes in your chords in the correct places on the treble clef staff (one chord per measure), using the rhythmic patterns you chose. Please also write the name of the chord above each measure. Example: Write "G" above a measure that uses that chord.



8. Optional: Write a melody line to go with your chord progression. Consider adding a bass line, maracas, and brake drum (or iron bell).
9. Practice, Revise, Refine, and Perform!