



Smithsonian Folkways

The Look of the Listen

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings Lesson plan

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Summary

In this lesson are opportunities for teaching and learning about some ways in which music is aligned with visual art. A sampling of songs from Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is presented, alongside the cover art relevant to the songs. Several well-known pieces are featured from the wide array of recordings first envisioned by Folkways Records' founder Moses Asch in the 1940s. Singing, chanting, and movement experiences are featured alongside examinations and discussion of the photographs and imaginative artwork of the historical album covers.

Suggested Grade Levels: K-3

Country: United States

Genre: Children's social music

Instruments: Voice, clapping

Language: English

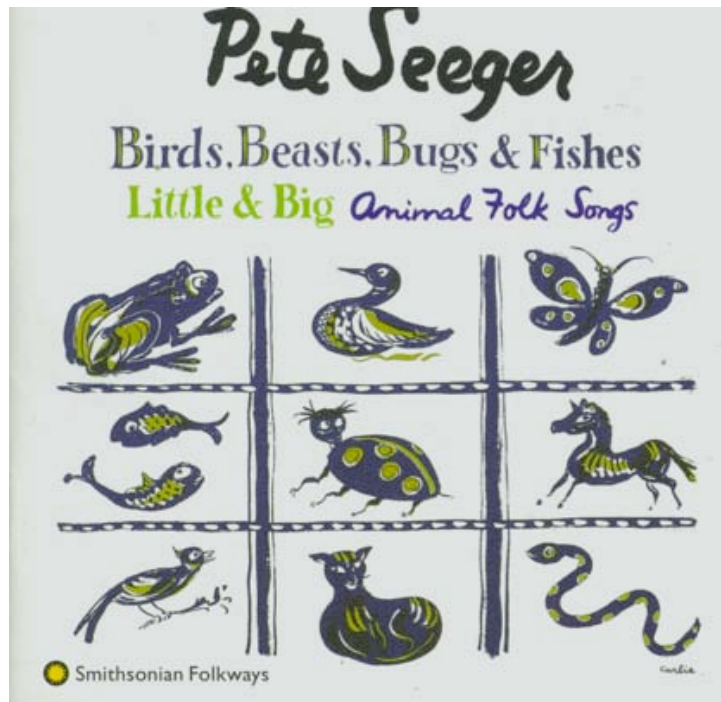
Co-Curricular Areas: Social Studies, Animals

National Standards: 1, 2, 6, 9

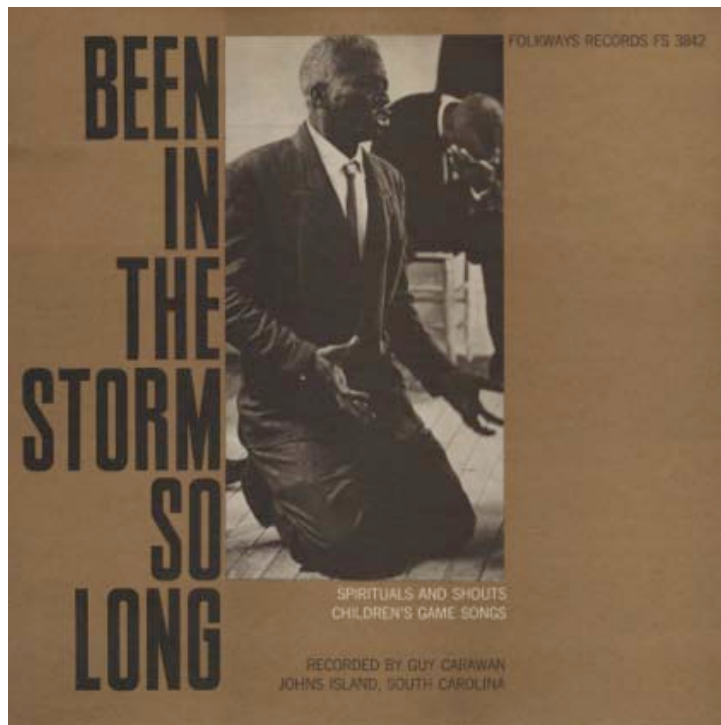
Prerequisites: Some singing experience is helpful, but not required.

Objectives: Students will sing, alone and in groups, using an appropriate tone. Students will keep a steady beat.

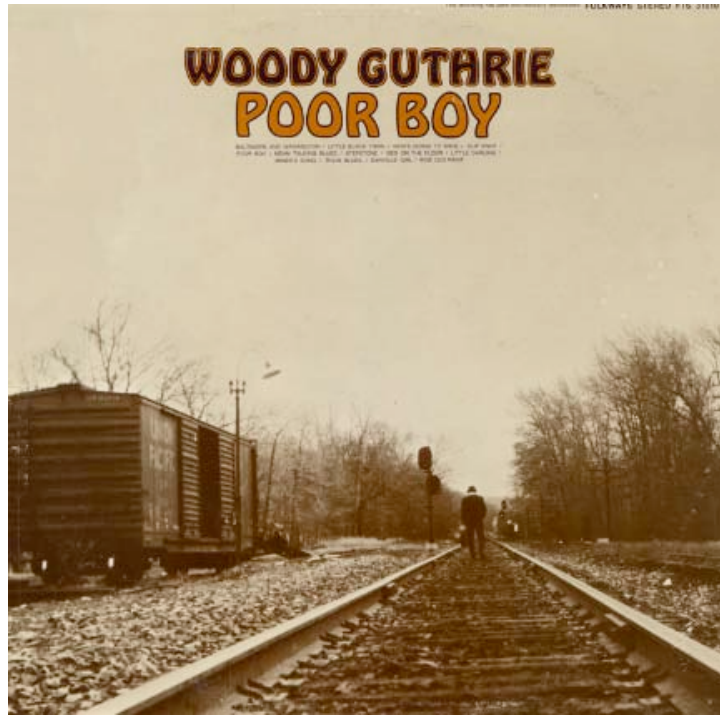
Materials:



“I Had a Rooster” and “Leatherwing Bat”
from [Birds, Beasts, Bugs and Fishes \(Little and Big\)](#) (1998) | SFW45039



“Old Lady Come From Booster” and “Shoo Turkey”
from [Been In the Storm So Long](#) (1967) | FW03842 / FS 3842



“Bed on the Floor” and “Train Blues”
from [Poor Boy](#) (1968) | FW31010 / FTS 31010



“Juba” and “Pretty Saro”
from [Old Love Songs and Ballads from the Big Laurel, North Carolina](#) (1964) |
FW02309 / FW02309

Additional Recording:

“Pretty Saro” from [Jean Ritchie and Doc Watson at Folk City](#) (1963) | SFW40005

Additional Materials: Appalachian dulcimer, guitar, train whistle

Lesson Segments:

1. **“I Had a Rooster”**—filling in animal sounds, including rooster melody (National Standards 1, 6); **“Leatherwing Bat”**—listening to verses, singing chorus (National Standards 1, 6)
2. **“Old Lady Come From Booster”** and **“Shoo Turkey”**—singing in call and response form (National Standards 1, 6, 9)
3. **“Bed On the Floor”** and **“Train Blues”**—singing chorus, identifying instruments (National Standards 1, 6, 9)
4. **“Pretty Saro”** and **“Juba”**—comparing singing styles, steady beat motions (National Standards 2, 6, 9)

1. [Birds, Beasts, Bugs and Fishes \(Little and Big\)](#) (1998) | SFW45039

Have the cover art on display to view and discuss what the songs on the recording are about. Leave visible while singing.

a. “I Had a Rooster”

- i. Listen to Pete Seeger sing the first verse.
- ii. Ask what instrument they hear (banjo).
- iii. Students learn the rooster response: “cocky doodle doo dee doodly doodly doodly doo.”
- iv. Listen again to recording. Students always sing rooster response and fill in other animal sounds.

b. “Leatherwing Bat”

- i. Students learn chorus section.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the chorus of "Leatherwing Bat". The first staff is in 3/4 time and contains the lyrics: "Ow di down dee did-dle um day, Ow di down dee did-dle um day, Ow di down dee". The second staff starts with a measure rest labeled "6" and contains the lyrics: "did-dle um day, Hey lee lee _____ li lye li lo". A red line is drawn under the blank space in the second staff, indicating a place for a student to fill in a melody.

- ii. Listen to Pete Seeger singing verses, students sing along on chorus. (optional add-on)
Teacher can show picture of each animal mentioned in verses: bat, woodpecker, bluebird, owl, turtle dove.

Assessment: Demonstration by students of use of appropriate singing voice and maintaining steady beat during performance.

2. [*Been In the Storm So Long*](#) (1967) | FW03842 / FS 3842

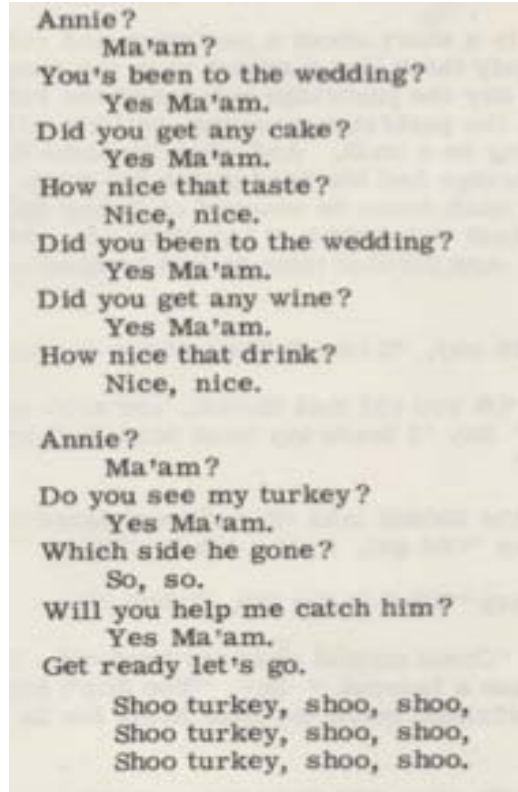
Have the cover art on display to talk about the content of the recording and thoughts about the people in the picture and what they might be doing/thinking. A map or Google Earth image of North Carolina and its neighboring islands, particularly John Island, would be appropriate.

a. **“Shoo Turkey”**

- i. Listen to recording and point out that there is a conversation going on.
- ii. Teach conversation to students. Teacher starts, students learn response.
- iii. Change the student’s name with each repeat, and change what they catch.

b. **“Old Lady Come From Booster”**

- i. Students listen to recording. When it gets to “painy in my...” section, students point at that part of their body.
- ii. Listen again, students point at their body and sing “ranky tanky” response.



Annie?
Ma'am?
You's been to the wedding?
Yes Ma'am.
Did you get any cake?
Yes Ma'am.
How nice that taste?
Nice, nice.
Did you been to the wedding?
Yes Ma'am.
Did you get any wine?
Yes Ma'am.
How nice that drink?
Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
Do you see my turkey?
Yes Ma'am.
Which side he gone?
So, so.
Will you help me catch him?
Yes Ma'am.
Get ready let's go.
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo.

- iii. Teacher leads beginning of song, solo student can choose where “painty” is and sing that line, class answers “ranky tanky.”

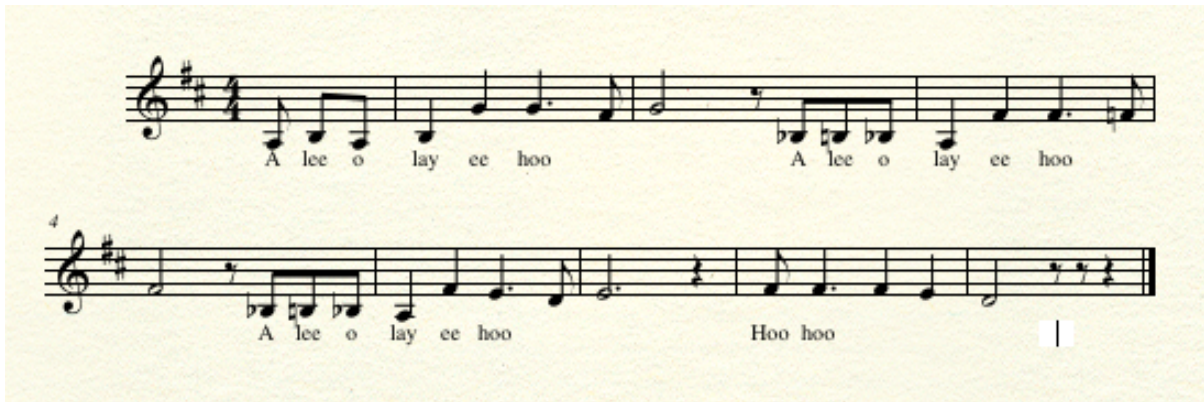
Assessment: Students use appropriate singing voice for the response and maintain a steady beat.

3. [Poor Boy](#) (1968) | FW31010 / FTS 31010

Have cover art on display. Ask children what they see/imagine is happening. Discuss Woody Guthrie and his fondness for trains, traveling on trains, and people who worked on railroads.

a. **“Bed on the Floor”**

- i. Students listen to beginning section of song.
- ii. Students learn to sing “train whistle” tune at beginning and end.



- iii. Students sing the “train whistle” call at beginning and end of song while listening to recording.
- iv. Teacher sings verses while strumming guitar, students sing at beginning and end. Student blows train whistle at start and finish.

b. **“Train Blues”**

- i. Students listen to recording and identify instruments (harmonica, guitar). Show pictures of the two instruments, including people who play both at same time (e.g., Woody, Bob Dylan).
- ii. Students line up in little “trains” of four to five students. They lead their train “down the tracks” (through the space) walking to the beat of the music. When the teacher calls “switch,” the engineer becomes the caboose.

Assessment: Students walk to steady beat. Students recognize and identify instruments.

4. [*Old Love Songs and Ballads from the Big Laurel, North Carolina*](#) (1964) | FW02309 / FW02309

Have cover art on display. Have students describe and imagine what the people in the photo are doing or thinking. Discuss North Carolina—and that it is the same place that the John Island music comes from. Do they hear any difference in the voices?

a. **“Pretty Saro”** as sung by Cas Wallin

- i. Ask students to describe what they hear (one man singing, shout singing, etc.)
- ii. Play recording of [“Pretty Saro”](#) as sung by Jean Ritchie. Ask students to compare difference between singing voices.
- iii. Show students Appalachian dulcimer. Let them try a gentle strum across the strings.
- iv. Teacher sings for students while playing dulcimer. For accompanying ideas, listen to Jean Ritchie’s playing on recording.

b. **“Juba”**

- i. Have students practice different ways of keeping steady beat with hands on knees, chest, into palm of hand.
- ii. Listen to “Juba” while tapping steady beat with two fingers into palm of hand.
- iii. Try a more complicated pattern while listening.
- iv. Take student suggestions for other ways to tap out the beat for “Juba” while they listen.