

One Flute, Two Flute, Red Flute, Blue Flute: Nigerian-Style Flute Music

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Summary:

These lessons will provide intermediate-level children the opportunity to hear improvised flute performance for solo, duet and octet ensembles. Students will learn to identify diverse musical elements, including steady beats, rhythm, melody, harmony and expressive qualities in an improvised setting. The series of lessons presented here, which draw upon a selection of Nigerian flute music, will facilitate students' creation of new musical phrases and compositions.

Suggested Grade Levels: 3-5, 6-8 Country: Nigeria Region: Jos Plateau North Central Nigeria (The Middle Belt) Culture Group: Anaguta Genre: Folk Music (Instrumental) Instruments: Handmade Flutes Language: None Co-Curricular Areas: Geography, World Cultures National Standards: 2, 3, 4, 6, 9

Prerequisites: Students need experience with mallet instruments and recorders as well as a working knowledge of the G pentatonic scale.

Objectives:

• Students will listen for evidence of basic musical elements in three recorded examples.

• Students will apply the basic musical elements to create compositions inspired by the recorded examples.

Materials: <u>http://www.folkways.si.edu/TrackDetails.aspx?itemid=7027</u> Recorders (soprano or alto) and or mallet instruments <u>Recording:</u> *Music of the Jos Plateau and other regions of Nigeria* (Various Artists, 1965)



Nigerian flag:





Map of the African continent:



Map of Nigeria:

Point out the cities of Abuja (capital), Lagos, Yola, and Jos, located on the Jos Plateau.



Lesson Segments:

- **One Flute** (National Standard #6)
- Two Flute (National Standards #2, 4, 6)
- **Red Flute, Blue Flute** (National Standards #2, 3, 4, 6, 9)

Lesson: One Flute

- 1. Prelude the listening with information to the students that the recording they are about to hear is completely improvised. Take a moment to discuss what it means to improvise music.
- 2. Play the recording from the beginning: <u>http://www.folkways.si.edu/TrackDetails.aspx?itemid=7027</u> Ask the following questions:
 - a. Where is this music from? (Nigeria)
 - b. How many instruments are playing? (One)
 - c. What instrument(s) is being played? (A handmade wooden flute)
- 3. Play the recording again and challenge students to trace the melody in the air.
- 4. Play the recording again and ask, "Which musical element(s) is the musician using in this performance?" (Steady beat, rhythm, melody)
- 5. Play the recording again and ask, "What skills might this musician be utilizing to create this improvised solo? (Creativity, imagination, phrasing, planning ahead)
- 6. Challenge students to consider their own skills on the recorder to create an improvised melody.

Rough transcription of the flute duet:



Lesson: Two Flute

- 1. Play the recording starting at 3:37 <u>http://www.folkways.si.edu/TrackDetails.aspx?itemid=7027</u>. Then ask the following questions:
 - a. "How many instruments do you hear? What instruments are they?" (Two flutes)
 - b. "Can you identify who's playing when?" (The two musicians are playing at the same time)
 - c. "How long are the musical ideas?" And, "How many beats do each of the ideas receive?" (4 or 8, depending on whether the counting is slower or faster)
- 2. Play the recording starting at 3:37 again. Ask the following question:
 - a. "Does this performance remind you of something you do with your friends and family members every day?" (One might identify parallels with having a verbal conversation--two people speaking together or one person followed by the other person. Likewise, the two flutes might be "having a conversation," simultaneously or in sequence.)
- 3. Play the recording starting at 3:37. Ask the following questions:
 - a. "Do the musical phrases/ideas that the musicians create stay the same or do they change?" (The ideas change, although there is some repetition of ideas, too.)
 - b. "How would you describe the role of each musician in this recording?" (They play high and low pitches, soloing and accompanying each other.)
 - c. Encourage students to turn and talk to a neighbor about what two musicians need to know in order to play a duet like the one you just heard. (Musical intuition that is developed through skill and practice, familiarity with one another's style, etc.)

Extension:

Students can create rhythms that are then turned into xylophone parts. Draw upon the following sequence of steps, where students participate as a class, as well as in pairs.

- 1. Students can invent rhythms in pairs, with each clapping two rhythms of eight beats separately until they are learned.
- 2. After the partners share their two clapping rhythms among each other, they should then immediately demonstrate the rhythm to the entire class of students. Turning to their neighbor, two students choose a rhythm and both are clapped at the same time by the whole class.
- 3. Student partners can then play their two invented rhythms on xylophones set in G-pentatonic. They should have two rhythms of eight beats to set to their choice of pentatonic pitches.
- 4. Direct the student partners to give their new melodies shape, based on their original invented rhythms. Request that they play with these two forms: (AABB) and (ABAB)
- 5. Once there is a set form, and the composition is learned, challenge students to take it one step further into improvised variations, such that the second of the two times is a variation of the first.
- 6. Share these rhythms-into-melodies amongst each other, including both the original and improvised variations.



Lesson: Red Flute, Blue Flute

- 1. Play the recording starting at 6:39 <u>http://www.folkways.si.edu/TrackDetails.aspx?itemid=7027</u> Discuss the featured instruments (flutes) and the improvised nature of the music.
- 2. Listen to the recording again. This time, have students conduct the duple meter and listen for the pentatonic pitch content of the melody. Indicate the meter and pentatonic pitches on a conventional staff, and sing the five pitches.
- 3. Listen to the recording again and have students pay attention to the pitch and rhythm content of the flutes. As patterns begin to emerge, notate them for the class. Alternately, create short pentatonic patterns of four beats. In all, eight patterns would be ideal.
- 4. Play on recorders the pentatonic patterns that emerged or were invented.
- 5. In groups of four students, charge them with the creation of music featuring 32 beats (eight measures of four beats each) that feature four of the eight patterns. Following a period of practice, have the students perform these recorder pieces for the class.