



Smithsonian Folkways

Colorful Genres in Harp music from Paraguay

A Smithsonian Folkways Lesson

Designed by: Penelope Quesada

Lincoln Elementary Performing Arts School

Summary:

The Paraguayan harp is a cultural emblem that represents not only the nation of Paraguay and its traditional music, but also the ideals that contribute to a collective notion of *paraguayidad* (i.e. “Paraguayness”). The Paraguayan diatonic harp serves as a melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic instrument. Its primary function is to provide harmonic and rhythmic foundation to *conjunto* music—music of a variety of instruments. At the heart of Paraguayan harp repertoire are *polcas paraguayas*, *guaranias* and *polca galopas* – all genres within the body of musical expressions in Paraguay. This lesson is divided in three segments that describe three colorful styles of Paraguayan music: the polca galopa, the guarani and the polca paraguaya.

Suggested Grade Levels: 3-5

Country: Paraguay

Region: South America

Culture Group: Paraguayan

Genre: Polca and Guarani

Instruments: Harp

Language: Spanish

Co-Curricular Areas: Social Studies, Spanish

National Standards: 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9

Prerequisites: Students should be familiar with playing the guitar, Orff instruments, and the recorder.

Objectives

- Listening (to instruments, beat, vocalization)
- Playing (Orff instruments, guitar, recorder)
- Moving (to instrumental interludes and beats)
- Becoming acquainted with the geography of South America
- Differentiate between 6/8 and 3/4
- Develop an awareness of the historical roots of the harp in Paraguay.
- Understand the concepts of *polcas paraguayas*, *guaranias* and *polca galopas*.

Materials:

- CD: *Latin American Festival: Various Artists*, Track 113.
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=2451>
- CD: *Maiteí América: Harps of Paraguay: Various Artists*, Tracks 102 and 120.
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=3225>
- Videos from Smithsonian Folkways' website:
Marcelo Rojas and Miguel Prado perform a harp duet
Marcelo Rojas and Martin Portillo perform "Pájaro campana"
Marcelo Rojas and Álvaro Marazzi
Harpmaker Oscar Maldonado
http://www.folkways.si.edu/video/mexico_central_south.aspx
- Orff instruments
- Recorders
- Guitars
- Map of South America and Paraguay

Lesson Segments:

1. **Paraguay and the Harp: Pajaro Campana, Polka Galopa**
(National Standards # 2,5,6, 7 and 9)
2. **Recuerdos de Ypavarai – Guaranía style** (National Standards #1, 6 and 9)
3. **Piririta – Polca Paraguaya and the Harp** (National Standards #2, 6 and 9)

Lesson 1: Paraguay and the Harp

1. Watch video of "Pájaro Campana"
http://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/video/CFV10179_700k_640_W.swf
 1. Ask students to keep a steady beat (6/8) with their feet and encourage them to emulate playing an imaginary instrument with their hands--showing if they can when the melody goes up or down. Lead students in understanding how the sounds are made on the various instruments.
 2. Ask students: "What instrument is playing?" (arpa, or harp)
 3. Ask students: "Where do you think this might be from?" (Paraguay)
 4. "What does the harp look like?" (Many strings stretched from one side of a wood frame to the other)

5. Ask students to examine a picture of a Paraguayan Harp (below) and make a list of some characteristics.



6. Ask students to determine the location of Paraguay by asking on which continent it can be found. Show the students a map of South America and point to Paraguay. Provide some information about the nation-state, including its capital city, its official languages, and its climate. Further information about these subjects can be found on the following page.



Paraguay is officially known as the Republic of Paraguay (Spanish: República del Paraguay). It is one of two landlocked countries in South America; the other is Bolivia. As of 2009, the population of Paraguay was estimated at 6.3 million. The capital and largest city is Asunción. The official languages of Paraguay are Spanish and Guaraní, both being widely spoken throughout the country, with around 92% of the general population speaking Spanish and 98% speaking Guaraní. The overall climate ranges from subtropical to temperate, and like most lands in the region, Paraguay has only a wet and dry season, not four seasons like most of the United States.

Show the different regions in Paraguay, and note the locations of rivers and cities.



Picture from Wikimedia Commons
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:La_Palmyre_002.jpg



Picture courtesy of the Smithsonian Collection

7. Give students some background information about the history of the harp (arpa). Include the following information:

Paraguayan harps are local adaptations of the instruments brought from Europe by Jesuit missionaries during the 17th and 18th centuries. The earliest references to the presence of the harp in Paraguay dates back to the 16th century, to a Spaniard named Sebastian Gaboto. The diatonic harp was utilized to accompany liturgical singing in Jesuit missions. Music became a tool for evangelizing the indigenous peoples.

After the expulsion of the Jesuits from Paraguay in the 18th century, some mission Indians kept their learned professions and assembled in towns, contributing to the colonial “mestizaje” (cultural and biological mixing). From the last quarter of the 19th century, a period of rebuilding during the Triple Alliance War (1865–1870), through the middle of the 20th century, the Guairá area produced many artists, intellectuals, luthiers, and musicians, such as performer and composer Félix Pérez Cardozo (1908–1952). Epifanio López (1912–2001) was a highly regarded luthier who established the first guitar and harp workshop in Asunción. Typically, these musicians, composers, and instrument-makers acquired and passed on their knowledge and skills through oral tradition.

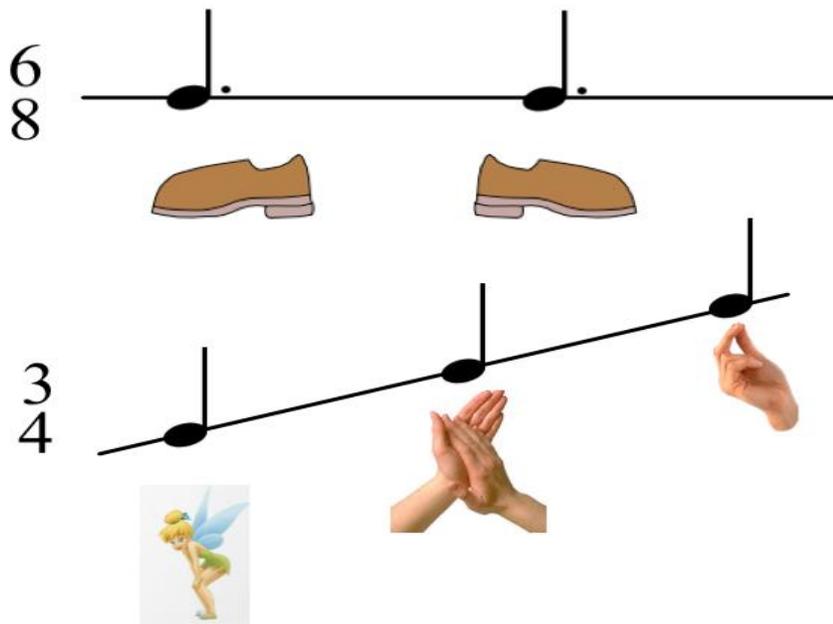


Pictures from the videos of Paraguayan Harpist Marcelo Rojas
http://www.folkways.si.edu/video/mexico_central_south.asp

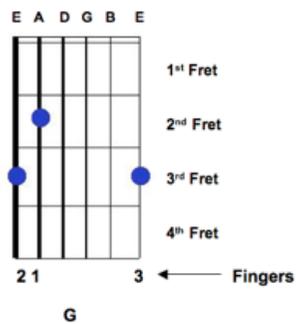
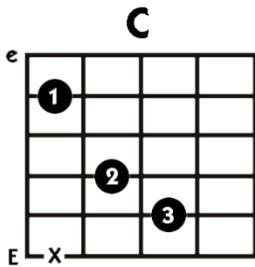
8. Have students listen to “Pájaro Campana”. Ask students to describe the musical characteristics of this Paraguayan Polka.
 - Tempo: Fast
 - Meter: Compound, 6/8
 - Rhythmic character: Lively, driven, syncopated
 - Special technique: *Sesquialtera*, the feeling of 3/4 against 6/8: // // // vs. /// ///
 - Form: polka, dance
 - Melodic phrases are syncopated
 - Harmony: Usually following a I–V–I–IV–I–V–I sequence
 - Accompaniment pattern: Broken bass chords with support of strumming patterns by harp or guitar.

9. Divide in two groups, and challenge them to “hold their own” by placing the sesquialtera in two groups. Group One will perform the 6/8 by stomping on beat one and four, while Group two will perform the 3/4 part with the first beat patting, the third beat clapping and fifth beat snapping. Each group can practice these parts separately, then together, and finally with the recording of “Pajaro Campana.”

Group One:	Stomp	/ (/) / (/)
		> >
Group Two:		/ (/) / (/) / (/)
		> > >
		Pat Clap Snap



A. Teach students the guitar part for “Pajaro Campana.” The guitar plays the steady beat in 6/8 on C and G chords, 4 Cs and then 4 Gs all the way through the piece.



Chord sequence: strum each chord on each beat.

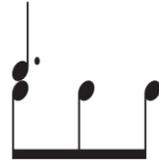
C

C

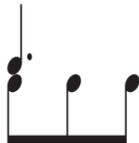
C

C

Beat



Beat



Beat Division

Beat Division

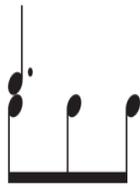
G

G

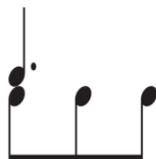
G

G

Beat



Beat



Beat Division

Beat Division

B. Teach students the melody for “Pájaro Campana” on the recorder (see Page 10).

C. Teach students the bass line for “Pajaro Campana” on the bass xylophone (see Page 10).

[Arranger]

Soprano Recorder

8

15

21

27

Bass xylophone part:

Xylophone

8

15

Assessment: Students will be able to (1) describe the arpa; (2) recognize *polca* style as played by the Paraguayan arpa; (3) keep the changing 3/4 and 6/8 beats of a sesquialtera; and (4) play a *polca* on classroom instruments.

Lesson2: Recuerdos de Ypavarai – Guaranía style

1. Listen to the song and ask “How is this song different from “Pajaro Campana?” (Answers might include the fact that this is a vocal and instrumental piece.)
2. Learn the Spanish lyrics by imitation, line by line. This can be done by the teacher’s, or a student’s, live pronunciation, or by starting and stopping the recording.
3. Sing the song together.

Recuerdos de Ypacarai - guaranía - Paraguay

Una noche tibia nos conocimos
Junto al lago azul de Ypacaraí,
Tú cantabas triste por el camino
Bellas melodías en guaraní.
Y con el embrujo de tus canciones
Iba renaciendo tu amor en mí
Y en la noche hermosa de plenilunio
De tus blancas manos sentí el calor
Que en tus caricias me dio el amor.

Dónde estás ahora cuñata-í
Que tu suave canto no llega a mí;
Dónde estás ahora
Mi ser te añora con frenesí.
Todo me recuerda tu dulce amor
Junto al lago azul de Ypacarai
Todo te recuerda
Mi amor te llama cuñata-í.

cuñata-í: in the Guaraní Indian
language means “girl”

Translation by Penelope Quesada

A warm night we met
Next to the lake Blue Ypacaraí
You were singing sad about the way
Old tunes in Guaraní.

And the spell of your songs
Was born and your love on me
And in the beautiful full moon night
In your white hands I felt the heat
That with his touch gave me love.

Where are you now cuñataí
May your gentle song does not reach me
Where are you now
My soul loves you madly.

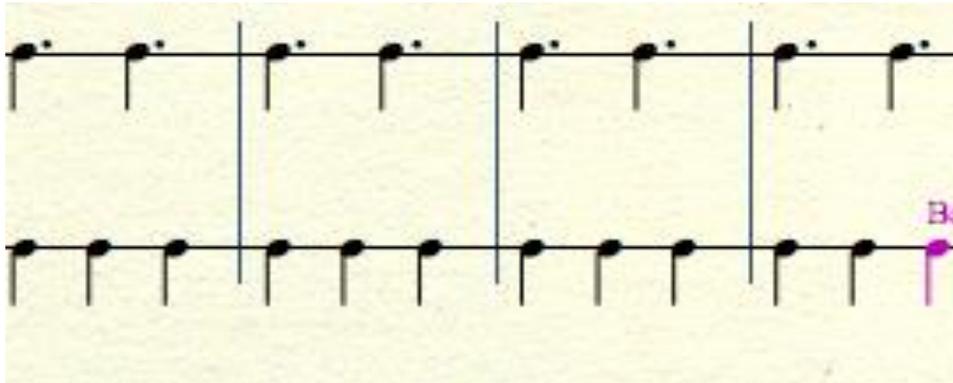
Everything reminds you my sweet love
Next to the lake Blue Ypacaraí
Everything reminds me of you
My love calls you cuñataí.

4. Listen to the instrumental version and mark steady beat with hand-clapping.
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=3225>
5. List together some of the musical characteristics of the Guarania:
 - Instrumentation: Vocal and instrumental
 - Tempo: Slow
 - Phrase: Longer than many song styles
 - Variations: Melodic accentuation and syncopation
 - Meter: 6/8 (like the polka)

Assessment: Students will be to (1) differentiate a “Guarania” from a “Polca” by identifying their musical characteristics and (2) sing a “Guarania”.

Lesson 3: Piririta – Polca Paraguaya and the Harp

1. Listen to the piece and mark the steady beat of dotted quarter in 6/8 by clapping. Mark the 3/4 with three quarter notes per measure. Pat the first quarter note, clap the second quarter note, and snap the third quarter note. Feel the 6/8 against 3/4. Try playing (with body percussion) the two metric interpretations together. (For students who have experienced Lesson One (Page 2), this will appear as a review—a transfer of knowledge about the sesquialtera to a new musical selection.)



2. Ask: “What are the music characteristics of this piece?”
 - Meter: Compound 6/8
 - Tempo: Moderate
 - Rhythm: Syncopation (in melody and bass lines)
 - Instruments: Arpa and Guitar
 - Feature: Rapid exchange between compound duple (6/8) or simple duple (2/4) meter and triple (3/4) meter.
 - Introduction: Short instrumental
 - Form: Bridge or recurrent instrumental interludes performed before and between stanzas.
3. Perform the 6/8 against 3/4 with body percussion without and then with the recording “Piririta.”

Assessment: Students will be able to demonstrate 6/8 against a 3/4 with body percussion.