



Rhythmic Journey Study Guide

Program Description

"Rhythmic Journey" is a high energy, interactive program that begins by introducing universal rhythm of the heart beat as played on the Native American pow wow drum. We then travel to the middle east and the drumming traditions of Pakistan, Egypt and Israel. Then it's off to Asia to hear the Indonesian gamelan, the South Indian tambourine, and the Japanese Taiko drums. While in Africa we'll hear a Zimbabwean lullaby, a Ghanaian xylophone jam and a Nigerian folk song! In South America we'll hear the sounds of the rain forest and create a Brazilian Samba parade! Then it's off to the Caribbean for sound of steel drums, conga drums and timbales! We wrap up our journey back home in the U.S. with a ragtime play-along! Along our "Rhythmic Journey", we'll point out destinations on a giant globe, explain many of the instruments' origins, and show how to create rhythm on hands, fingers and toes!

Artist Bio

The members of Ritmo Blu are all professional musicians and educators with diverse backgrounds. They each began their musical studies on different instruments like violin, ukulele, and trumpet. Now they create music with percussion instruments, those instruments that are either stuck, scraped or shaken. The members of Ritmo Blu travel the world learning about other cultures, studying with masters of percussion, and gathering rare instruments. On stage, they combine their many years of experience and different areas of expertise into a program that is engaging, educational, exciting and fun!

Background on Art Form

Rhythm is something we were all born with. In fact, we all carry a bass drum around with us everywhere we go. Our heart is constantly beating out the rhythm of life! Early in history, man would express this internal rhythm on things around him; sticks, stones, logs, bones and even his own hands and feet. These early rhythms quickly became an important part of life; accompanying birth, the changing of the seasons, and funerals. By 3000 B.C., percussion instruments began to resemble what we recognize as drums with bodies made of clay and heads made of animal skins. Today, the skin of goat, cow, fish, and even lizard still give drums from different countries their unique sound. An important development in world drumming happened in the 1950's with the introduction of slavery. When Africans were brought to South America, the Caribbean, and America to work on plantations, they brought with them their rich tradition of expressing themselves through rhythm, song, and story. African rhythms and drumming styles soon became combined with

those of Europe to create the rhythms of jazz, reggae, and hip-hop that we still enjoy today!

Prepare (Pre- or pre-performance)

Teachers, please read this to your students.

Today we're going to enjoy a by Ritmo Blu - a group of professional percussionists who are going to take us around the world through drumming and song. These performers will introduce us to many new instruments from around the world and share with us how drumming relates to history, language and geography. Through listening, singing, and dancing, we'll learn more about who we are by finding out more about the customs and traditions of people who live and play in other parts of the world.

Warm Up Questions to set the stage for engaging students

What is percussion?

Can anyone name a type of drum?

What are some different ways that drums can be played?

How do drums vary from culture to culture? Why?

What are some ways drums may have been used throughout history? (communication, frightening enemies, religious worship, ceremonies, etc.)

Warm Up Questions for meeting the Georgia Performance Standards for "Listening/Speaking/Viewing":

Describe the perfect audience.

What are some of our class rules for being good listeners?

How do we show someone we appreciate their visit to our school or classroom?

How does being part of an audience help make you a good citizen?

What are some examples of bad audience behavior or attitudes?

How does a negative audience member effect your enjoyment of a show or performance?

How would this make the performer feel?

How do we want the performer to feel when they leave our school or classroom?

Reflect (Post- or post-performance)

Reflection activities may vary, but some suggestions include - mapping some of the places encountered along the 'rhythmic journey'; journaling about the performance experience; creating a short in-class performance of rhythm using hands, finger-snapping, or light desktop drumming (or combinations): list the names of 3 instruments used in the performance, identify the way in which they were played and describe the type of sounds they made; researching the history of drums or allowing students to create their own drum which explores their cultural background or cultures currently being studied; challenge students to draw or devise a way to recreate their favorite percussion instrument from the show.

Additional Activities

- Make a coffee can, or oatmeal box drum. What are the different parts of your drum? Where does the sound come from. Try closing and opening the bottom of the drum to see how that affects the sound. Make a shaker from a juice can or water bottle and sand, beads, or pebbles. How is the sound of your shaker affected depending on what materials you use inside?
- Review a world map or globe. Find the Middle East (Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia), West Africa (Senegal, Guinea, Liberia, Ghana, Mali), South America (Brazil, Peru), Asia (Indonesia, and the Caribbean Islands (Trinidad, Tobago, Cuba). What can you find out about the people from these countries? Listen to some music from these countries. What sounds are familiar? Can you pick out the percussion instruments? Is it a membranophone or idiophone making the sounds you hear?
- Draw a picture of one of the drums or other percussion instruments you saw in today's program. Put yourself in the picture. When you're finished drawing, pretend you're playing that instrument and make up your own piece of drumming music!
- Think of your favorite instrument from today's program. Write a poem or narrative about that instrument, where it came from, what it looks like, what it sounds like and how it's played!
- *Drum Talk* - Pair up and find something to play rhythm on (pencil and a book, two cups, hands, feet, lap). Have a rhythmic conversation with your partner, leaving space for them to "talk" with their "instrument". Experiment with how you might express different feelings (excited, happy, urgent, somber) using your rhythm "instruments" and not your voices.
[How might the slaves from west Africa used this rhythmic form of communication once in their new home? How might the rhythms, customs, and language they brought with them change the culture of the country they were taken?]

Vocabulary

rhythm - the aspect of music comprising all the elements (as accent, meter, and tempo) that relate to forward movement

sieve - a device with meshes or perforations through which finer particles of a mixture (as of ashes, flour, or sand) of various sizes may be passed to separate them from coarser ones. Believed by many to be the origin of the first drum!

riq - an Egyptian tambourine made with a fish skin.

zil - finger cymbals that were incorporated in the original (frame) drum to create the tambourine or riq.

kanjira - a small lizard skinned tambourine from South India.

Taiko - the family of drums played in Japan. "Daiko" is the Japanese word for drum. "O-daiko" means big drum!

yoruba - refers to the traditions, language and drumming from southwestern Nigeria that have influenced the musical styles of South America, the Caribbean, and U.S.

idiophone - a percussion instrument which creates sound primarily by way of the instrument itself vibrating, without the use of strings or skins. Rattles, shakers or scrapers.

membranophone - a musical percussion instrument; usually consists of a hollow cylinder with a membrane or skin stretch across each end.

Resources for Teachers & Students

Rhythmweb, Online Resource World Percussion Instruments <http://rhythmweb.com>

The World of Music <http://library.thinkquest.org/11315/>

World Music Zone <http://www.sesameworkshop.org/sesamestreet/music/zone/groove/>

World Percussion Gallery, by N. Scott Robinson <http://www.nscottrobinson.com/gallery.php>

Books

Planet Drum: A Celebration of Percussion and Rhythm by Mickey Hart

The Joy of Drumming: Drums & Percussion Instruments from Around the World by Tom Klower