

Exploring Indonesian Culture through Gamelan Music

Overview

During this unit of study, students will explore Gamelan music of Indonesia and apply the learning by replicating a simple Gamelan ensemble performance on barred Orff instruments and drums. Students will learn that even today, the Gamelan ensemble is used as a part of Muslim religious ceremonies.

Grade

5

Subject

Music (with connections to Visual Art and Social Studies lessons)

Essential Standards

Music

- 5.ML.1.1 - Illustrate independence and accuracy while singing and playing instruments within a group or ensemble.
- 5.MR.1.3 - Exemplify appropriate behaviors as a participant and observer of music in relation to the context and style of music performed.
- 5.CR.1.2 - Understand the relationships between music and concepts from other areas.

Social Studies

- 5.C.1.4 - Understand how cultural narratives (legends, songs, ballads, games, folk tales and art forms) reflect the lifestyles, beliefs and struggles of diverse ethnic groups.

Essential Questions

- What are the roles of music in Indonesia?
- What is a Gamelan ensemble and why is it important to the culture of Indonesia?
- How can the music of the Gamelan transfer to our classroom instruments?
- How does the form and structure of the music played by a Gamelan ensemble compare to the form and structure of American folk music?

Materials

- Silver-Burdett *Making Music* Grade 5 text (2008 ed) pg. 318-19 and corresponding CD recording
- *Flowing Waters: Building a Musical Bridge between the Orff-Schulwerk Ensemble and Javanese Gamelan:* Holtfreter and Widaryanto (Book and accompanying DVD available through Plank Road Publishing) \$39.95
- YouTube videos:
 - Puppet Theater: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfydro4X2t0>
 - Gamelan Ensemble at UNC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHjXOKSzaFQ>
- Computer and projector
- Culture of Indonesia PowerPoint
- Orff metallophones, xylophone and glockenspiels, prepared and numbered with Pelong tuning (specific tuning guidelines are in *Flowing Waters*)
- Bongos and 1 tubano, prepared to represent *Kendang* drums
- *Ritjik-Ritjik* score (attached)

Duration

Two 45-minute lesson periods (this could be extended to multiple days depending on the school, teacher schedule, and frequency of class meetings, as needed)

Procedure

Day 1

1. Using the Culture of Indonesia PowerPoint, share a little bit about Indonesian culture. Show the world map and locate Indonesia (slide 2). Show images of Indonesian clothing, arts, dances, musical instruments, and religion (slides 3-8). Share that Indonesian art and culture is diverse and has been shaped around its hundreds of ethnic groups, each with cultural differences that have shifted over the centuries. Today, Indonesian culture is a mix of Arabic, Chinese, Malay and European influences. Indonesian art and culture has also been influenced by many religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Islam.
2. Introduce students to Wayang Kulit (Shadow Puppet Theater) and the use of the Gamelan ensemble as the accompanying music for the performances using the images and song "Patalon" in the *Making Music* text. Explain that the Wayang was likely brought to Indonesia by traders and merchants from India, who also brought Muslim and Hindu religious practices to Indonesia and that even today, the Gamelan ensemble is used as a part of Muslim religious ceremonies. The culture of Indonesia supports many belief systems and the citizens live together in peace.
3. Tell students that gamelan is the traditional ensemble music of Java and Bali in Indonesia, made up predominantly of percussive instruments. The most common instruments used are metallophones played by mallets, gongs, and hand-played drums.
4. Show students video clips of the Puppet Theater and the Gamelan performance. Ask the students to describe the performances and compare the music to other types of music you have studied, including US folk music and music of various Asian countries. Ask students:
 - What instruments do you see and hear?
 - What clothes are the performers wearing?
 - How many people are playing instruments?
 - Can you sing any of the melody?
 - How would you describe the sounds?
 - What is the form and structure of the music played by the Gamelan ensemble?
5. Introduce the students to the instruments of the Gamelan ensemble using video of F. X. Widaryanto on the *Flowing Waters* DVD (10 mins.). Ask the students to identify classroom instruments that are like the instruments used in the Gamelan ensemble (for example, the Bass Metallophone is similar to the Kempul, the bongos/tubano are similar to the Kendhang, the alto metallophones are similar to the Bonang and Gender, etc.).

Day 2

6. Use teaching process and notation of the song, *Ritjik-Ritjik* (title translates to Flowing Waters) as outlined in *Flowing Waters* (p. 13) to guide students towards performance. See *Ritjik-Ritjik* score, attached.
 - Teach students to sing the two principal melodic phrases using scale numbers.
 - Teach each instrument part by transferring melody onto bars.
 - Teach rhythmic and Kendang parts through Ta-doo and Da-doo syllables and transfer onto percussion instruments.
 - Rotate students through until each has had the opportunity to play a melodic part and a rhythmic part at least once. Students can reinforce the melodic line with voice if not at an instrument.

7. Once all parts have been realized, alternate students on the various ensemble parts as many times as time allows.

Culminating Performance and Extension Activity

8. Students will incorporate *Ritjik-Ritjik* into their next concert and will perform the gamelan music for parents and the school community.
9. As an optional extension activity, you may work with the Visual Art teacher at your school to design shadow puppet characters to display during the performance. Students may also explore writing their own folktales, based on the book *Indonesian Children's Favorite Stories* by Joan Suyenaga.

Ritjik-Ritjik

Full Score

Beat	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Saron Slenthem Gender Gambang Bonang																
	3	5	6	5	6	5	7	6	:3	2	3	2	3	2	7	6
Saron Peking																
	33	55	66	55	66	55	77	66	:33	22	33	22	33	22	77	66
Kethuk																
	-K	: -K	-K													
Kenong																
		5		5		5		6	:2		2		2		6	
Kempul																
			6		6		7		:3		3		3		7	
Gong Ageng																
								G	:G							G
Kendhang																
	Td	dd	Dd	dd	Dd	dd	Dd	d-	:Td	dd	Dd	dd	Dd	dd	Dd	d-

Principal Melody

