Son Jarocho from Veracruz:
Exploration of Music and Dance
Forms A Smithsonian Folkways Lesson
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Suggested Grade Levels: 3-5, 6-8, 9-12
Country: Mexico
Region: Veracruz
Culture Group: Mexican Genre: Son Jarocho
Instruments: Voice
Language: Spanish
Co-Curricular Areas: Spanish, Social Studies, Dance
National Standards: 1, 5, 6, 8, 9

Musical Knowledge/Skills: Listening to (instruments, beat, meter); Spanish words and lyrics; Song Structure/ Singing (partial lyrics and full melodies); Dancing

General Knowledge/Skills: Getting to know the culture of Mexico--its language, location, values; the migration of music, the importance of dance.

Materials from Folkways:

- La Bamba: Sones Jarochos from Veracruz performed by José Gutiérrez & Los Hermanos Ochoa (SFW40505)—liner notes, English and Spanish lyrics http://www.folkways.si.edu/jose-gutierrez-los-hermanos-ochoa/la-bamba-sones-jarochos-from-veracruz/latin-world/music/album/smithsonian


- “El Pájaro Cu” (The Coo Bird) from La Bamba: Sones Jarochos from

- Videos of “La Bamba” and “Balaju” [http://s.si.edu/mexico-videos](http://s.si.edu/mexico-videos)

**Instruments:** hands (clapping); voice; feet (dancing); **cajon** (wooden box)

**Other Materials:** map of Veracruz; Photos/videos of the culture, people, and location; photos of instruments or actual instruments; other videos found in library

**Experiences:**

Watch videos of “La Bamba” and “Balaju” [http://s.si.edu/mexico-videos](http://s.si.edu/mexico-videos)

**“El Zapateado”**

- Listen to recording
  - (a) Clap/Pat different patterns to 6/8 – (sesquialtera) Discuss meter/use rhythm sticks to tap out beats or dance steps
  - (b) Move side to side to the downbeats
    - Ask students if they hear what type of instruments are being used; explain instruments through pictures, video, or having the instruments present. Ask students what instruments are common in other music? What instruments are different? Is the dance used an instrument?
    - Explain short history of Veracruz and **son jarocho** music and history of the folk music tradition (See liner notes and Grove Music Online for information)
  - Explain the **zapateado** and show video of dances – rapid movement of the dancer’s feet against the ground or a **tarima** (raised wooden platform) producing a percussive accompaniment normally performed during instrumental interludes so the singing is not drowned out. (See Grove Music Online)
  - Explain type of dance (**jarabe**) – Example is the **Mexican Hat Dance** played in the video
  - Departing from the popular well-known dance show another video of other dances of the **jarabe** and/or explore the history of the Mexican Hat Dance –
  - Explain meaning of the word **jarabe** –refers to “sweet syrup:”
“Jarabe” is derived from the Arabic word “Xarab” which means mixture of herbs

- Trace the meaning of the word and song and figure out where is it today - Originating from Spain and developed in Mexico; Son jarochos influenced by African slaves (e.g. La Bamba); moved into mariachi music/popular Latin music; It is now present in the U.S. in folk dance troupes – professionally, in schools, and in popular music (e.g. Los Lobos – Album: Pistola y Corazon);
- Find popular son jarochos in popular music and in Mariachi music
- Hand out lyrics in Spanish and English; discuss the lyrics and meanings; dissect 10 –line stanzas (decimas) commonly sung in verses comprised with ten lines in a rhyme scheme - abbaaccddc, which develops a theme introduced by a quatrain (rhymed abab). Textual material may be set or improvised, religious or secular.
- Create own decimas in English or Spanish

“El Pájaro Cu” (The Coo Bird)

- Listen to recording
  (c) Clap/Pat different patterns to 6/8 – (sesquialtera) Discuss meter/use rhythm sticks to tap out beats
  (a) Learn dance move and practice with and without the music
  Zapateado: Café con pan Café con pan
  LL R L RR L R
  1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6
- Ask students if they hear what type of instruments are being used; explain instruments through pictures, video, or having the instruments present; Ask students what instruments are common in other music?; What instruments are different?; Is the dance used an instrument?
- Explain the zapateado – rapid movement of the dancer’s feet against the ground or a tarima (raised wooden platform) producing a percussive accompaniment normally performed during instrumental interludes so the singing is not drowned out – Grove Music Online); show video of dances
- Hand out lyrics in Spanish and English; discuss the lyrics and meanings; dissect 10 –line stanzas (decimas); Learn more about the poetic structure; try to create own lyrics using decimas in English and/or Spanish; try improvising

Extensions:

- Lesson easily can be tailored to age group; for older students with more in-depth talk about issues of musical migration. From where does a particular music originate, change, and adapt when it travels and is recreated in different genres, cultures, and locations? Trace songs
through different musical genres.

- Listen to more music from the region. Find videos that explain the different dances and dance moves; go watch a traditional folk dance company; create dances and songs; learn more about the costumes
- Invite local musicians and dancers to come and conduct a lecture or demonstration.
- Obtain other instruments of the ensemble and learn simple bass parts of the *Marimobola* (Chord pattern can be used on bass Orff instruments or other bass instruments), *Quijada*, *Cajon*; *Jarana*, etc. Listen to recordings for instrumental and *jarana* strum patterns; create a *cajon* or *tarima* for use in practice or performance.