



Understanding Global Cultures in the Classroom Through the Caribbean Folk Music

by

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Background: Music Education in the Caribbean

Caribbean education is based on colonial history emanating from European and Latin America nations including Spain, Portugal, France, Britain and the Dutch.

In the last quarter of the 20th Century, the music curriculum in partaker started to see a shift in the content where it include indigenous music in addition to the European music theory, choral and instrumental education. This shift was inspired by the newly emerging small island states with an initiative to rethinking the purpose of education – wherein one of the pillars was to:

(a) education should be seen as a means for both personal opportunity and national development (Hackett, 2023).

Background: Music Education in the Caribbean (Cont.)

Age range of school children	Level of education	Music Curriculum
Ages 3-7	kindergarten or nursery schools	
5-6 6-7 Until Age 11	Primary school	No music European music theory is offered. Music is offered in schools as rote method for choral musical ensembles and play by ear apprenticeship approach for instrumental programs

Background: Music Education in the Caribbean (Cont.)

Age range of school children	Level of education	Music Curriculum
11 until Age 16	Secondary School :	Curriculum based in Caribbe Examinations Council (CXC) Music theory Instrumental music Choral music
	Secondary School (A-Level)	Curriculum based on Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) Music theory Instrumental music Choral music

Charles Hoffer's Principles of Effective Teaching and Learning Music Hoffer (1983) Nine principles of effective teaching and learning of music:

1. Experience with music; singing, playing instruments, listening, composing and dancing.
2. Bringing out musical qualities; exploiting the learners potential e.g. in voice, playing of instruments etc.
3. Aural experience should be part of every music lesson.
4. The significance of Whole and Part Learning should be understood, e.g. presentation of a whole sonata then breaking it in pieces (analysis) then presenting the whole again; teaching a song etc.
5. Having a scale of reference; having something to refer to before making a relative decision e.g. have a sense of judgment in choosing set pieces that can be completed within a limited time to avoid pressure and stress; Know how to begin music in a new school etc.

Charles Hoffer's Principles of Effective Teaching and Learning Music Hoffer (1983) Nine principles of effective teaching and learning of music: (cont.)

6. Identifying the degree of difficulty in given topics
7. Employing distributed effort, e.g. having numerous short sessions of practice instead of few long ones (because concentration span will be affected as fatigue affects internalization) for voice or instrumental training.
8. Considering singleness of concentration; go slower so as to master a concept e.g. on concepts like ornaments, harmony, composition etc.
9. Having meaningful teaching; teaching has to have value and relevance to the student. Shape learning with a view of market/ music industry

Mama, Bake That Johnny Cake, Christmas Comin'

A folk song from the Bahamas

Mama Bake That Johnny Cake, Christmas Comin'

Folk song from the Bahamas

Ma - ma, bake that John-ny Cake, Christ - mas com - in'.
Ma - ma, bake that John-ny Cake, Christ - mas com - in'.
Christ - mas com - in', Christ - mas com - in',
Christ - mas com - in', Christ - mas com - in',

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Country: [Bahamas](#)

Subject: [Christmas](#)

Harmony: [Orff arrangements / chords I & V](#)

Meter: [4](#)

Scale: [hexatonic](#)

Tones: [drmfst](#)

Source: *Silver Burdett Music, Early Childhood*, Silver Burdett Company, 1981

El perrito chino

A folk song from Cuba

El perrito chino

Cuban folk song



Cuan - do sa - lí de la Hab - a - na de na - die me des - pe - dí

so - lo de un pe - ri - to chi - no que ve - nía - a tras de mí.

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Como el perrito era chino
un señor me lo compró
por un poco de dinero
y unas botas de charol.

Las botas se me rompieron
el dinero se acabó
¡Ay! perrito de mi vida
¡Ay! perrito de mi amor.

English Transition

When I left Havana
I said goodbye to nobody
Except the Chinese puppy
that came behind me.

Credits: Bethsnotes.com

Brinca la tablita

A folk song form the Dominican Republic

Brinca la tablita

Folk song from Mexico & the Dominican Republic



English Translation

Jump over the little board

Jump over the little board,
I already jumped over it.
Jump over it again,
I'm tired now.

Two and two are four,
Four and two are six,
Six and two are eight,
And eight, sixteen.

--

Credits: Bethsnotes.com

Dodo Titite

A folk song (Lullaby) from Haiti

Lullaby (Haiti)

Haitian folk song

Do - do, do - do ti - tite Do - do sou bras manman ou. Ge-ne

ral La-ca - ros ré-té Anse - à - Veau Pas quitté an - yien pou ti - tite à moin, Do

Fine

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moin, M'ob - li - gé cou - pé ju - pon moin

D.C. al fine

Pou'm fait casa - que pou' ti - tite à moin moin

Credits: Bethsnotes.com

Dodo, dodo titite
Dodo sou bras manman ou
General Lacaros rété Anse-à-Veau
Pas quitté anyien pou titite à moin
(repeat)

M'obligé coupé jupon moin
Pou'm fait casaque pou' titite à
moin

English Transation

Sleep, sleep little one
Sleep in your mother's arms
General Lacaros in Anse-à-Veau
Didn't leave anything for my baby
(repeat)

Day-O (Banana Boat Song)

Jamaican folk song

Refrain



Day - O, Day - O, Day-light come and I wan-na go home



Day - O, Day - O, Day-light come and I wan-na go home. Fine



Come, Mis-ter Tal - ly Man, tal - ly me ba - na - (na) Day-light come and I wan-na go home



Come, Mis-ter Tal - ly Man, tal - ly me ba - na - (na) Day-light come and I wan-na go home.

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Six han', se-ven han', eight han' bunch, Day-light come and I wan-na go home



Six han', se-ven han', eight han' bunch, Day-light come and I wan-na go home. D.C. al fine

Credits: Bethsnotes.com

Lyrics and meaning of Day O (Banana Boat Song)

This is a work song, thought to be sung by Jamaican banana workers, working the night shift loading bananas onto ships. In the morning, they want their work to be counted up so that they can go home. There were numerous versions of lyrics, some likely improvised on the spot by the singers as a call and response. The song was probably created around the second half of the nineteenth century or the first half of twentieth century, where there was a rise of the banana trade in Jamaica.

De Tierra Lejana

A Folk song from Puerto Rico

De tierra lejana

Folk song from Puerto Rico



1. De tie-rra le - ja - na ve - ni - mos a ver - te, nos sir - ve de guí - a
la es - tre - lla de O - rien - te. Oh bri - llan - te es - tre - lla que a - nun - cias la au - ro - ra,
no nos fal - te nun - ca tu luz bien - he - cho - ra. ¡Glo - ria en las al - tu - ras
al Hi - jo de Dios! — ¡Glo - ria en las al - tu - ras y en la tie - rra paz!

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De tierra lejana venimos a verte;

nos sirve de guía la estrella de Oriente.

Refrain

Oh brillante estrella que anuncias la aurora,

no nos falte nunca tu luz bienhechora.

¡Gloria en las alturas al Hijo de Dios!

¡Gloria en las alturas y en la tierra paz!

Translation

From a distant land we come to see you;
The star of the Orient serves as our
guide.

Johnny Grotto

A Folk song from Trinidad and Tobago

Johnny Grotto

Folk song from Trinidad and Tobago

Call *Response*



John - ny Grot - to was a fi - sher-man's son, Yeah yeah yeah ho

Call *Response* © bethsnotes.com



John - ny Grot - to was a fi - sher-man's son, A long time a - go

When he set out to sea he had one thing in mind
Yeah yeah yeah ho
He wanted to see how much fish he could find
A long time ago

When the fishing was good he was feeling alright
Yeah yeah yeah ho
Said the fishing was good he was feeling alright
A long time ago

It was late in the evening when fish start to bite
Yeah yeah yeah ho
Just before dark when the fish start to bite
A long time ago

And the night was so bright that a star was in sight
Yeah yeah yeah ho
Said the night was so bright that a star was in sight
A long time ago

He catch so much fish that he stayed out all night
Yeah yeah yeah ho
He catch so much fish that he stayed out all night
A long time ago



Translation

When the fishing was good

He was feeling alright

Yeah yeah yeah ho!!

Said the fishing was good

He was feeling alright

A long time ago

Credits: Bethsnotes.com

Four White Horses

A Folk song from Virgin Islands

FOUR WHITE HORSES

FOLK SONG FROM THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Four white hors-es, on the riv-er. Hey, hey, hey,— up to-mor-row. Up to-mor-row is a
rain-y day. Come on and join our shad-ow play. Shad-ow play is a ripe ba-na-na.
Hey, hey, hey,— up to-mor-row. Up to-mor-row is a rain-y day.

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Lyrics

Four white horses on the river
Hey, hey, hey, up tomorrow
Up tomorrow is a rainy day
Come on and join our shadow play
Shadow play is a ripe banana
Hey, hey, hey, up tomorrow
Up tomorrow is a rainy day

Credits: [Bethsnotes.com](https://bethsnotes.com)

Conclusion

Caribbean music favors ostinatos.

- Caribbean musical performance is always a communal event which means everyone is expected to participate in the music.
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- Many Caribbean musical performances accompany religious or civic rituals.
- Caribbean main musical instruments include membranophones.
- In the current times, many young people in the Caribbean have now been exposed to watching the Television and so they also like modern music from around the world that is naturally infused into the Caribbean pop music such as bachata, merengue, palo, mambo, calypso, soca, chutney, reggae, reggaeton, salsa, and zouk.

Reference

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