

# 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.)**

Level of education	Music Curriculum
kindergarten or nursery schools	
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
	kindergarten or nursery schools

## **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.)

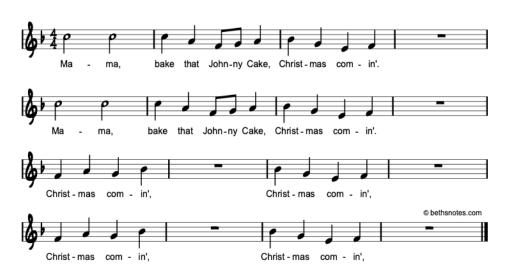
- 6. Identifying the degree of difficulty in given topics
- 7. Employing distributed effort, e.g. having numerous short sessions of practice instead of few long ones (because concentration span will be affected as fatigue affects internalization) for voice or instrumental training.
- 8. Considering singleness 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



Country: **Bahamas** 

Subject: Christmas

Harmony: Orff

arrangements / chords I & V

Meter: 4

Scale: <u>hexatonic</u>

Tones: <u>drmfst</u>

Source: Silver Burdett Music,

Early Childhood, Silver Burdett Company, 1981

## El perrito chino A folk song from Cuba

Cuban folk song

#### El perrito chino



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.

## Brinca la tablita

### A folk song form the Dominican Republic

#### Brinca la tablita



#### **English Translation**

Jump over the little board

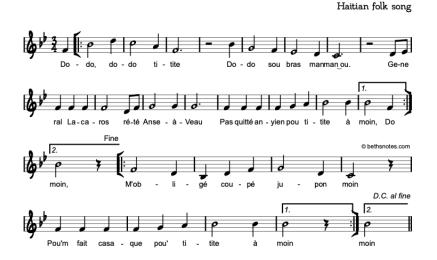
Jump over the little board, I already jumped over it. Jump over it again, I'm tired now.

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

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## Dodo Titite A folk song (Lullaby) from Haiti

#### Lullaby (Haiti)



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



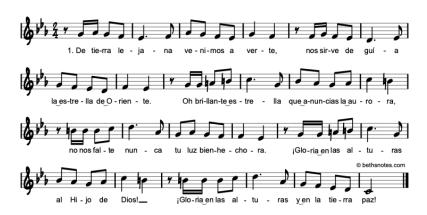
## Lyrics and meaning of Day O (Banana Boat Song)

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



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!

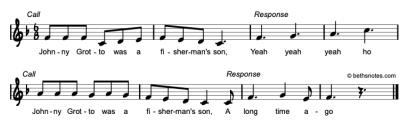
#### **Translation**

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



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

It was late in the evening when fish start to bite Yeah veah veah ho

Just before dark when the fish start to bite A long time ago

When the fishing was good he was feeling alright Yeah veah veah ho

Said the fishing was good he was feeling alright

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 staved out all night A long time ago



When the fishing was good

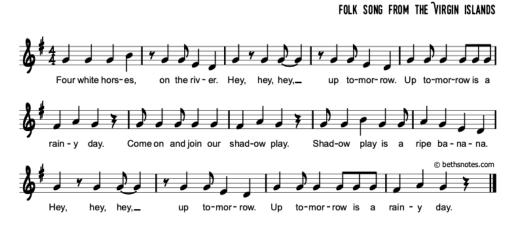
He was feeling alright Yeah yeah yeah ho!! Said the fishing was good

He was feeling alright A long time ago



## Four White Horses A Folk song from Virgin Islands

#### FOUR WHITE HORSES



#### **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



#### 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

**Akombo, D. O.** & Kim, Y. H. (2015). Music Pedagogies Across Two Cultures: *Samulnori* Ensemble of South Korea and *Mukanda* Ensemble of Kenya. *Finnish Journal of Music Education*, Vol.18, 78-86. <a href="https://sites.uniarts.fi/web/fjme/-/vol-18-01-2015/1.5">https://sites.uniarts.fi/web/fjme/-/vol-18-01-2015/1.5</a>

Beth's Notes Inc. (2023). Folk Songs from the Caribbean Islands. Accessed 9 November 2023 from <a href="https://www.bethsnotesplus.com/2013/02/folk-songs-from-caribbean-islands.html">https://www.bethsnotesplus.com/2013/02/folk-songs-from-caribbean-islands.html</a>