

# World music in the classroom

The importance of incorporating world music as part of the music curriculum in schools and classrooms is at its most relevant in intercultural Ireland. Here are some ideas for activities and resources on world music.

## Ethnic instruments

A selection of small handheld ethnic instruments would greatly enhance the children's experience of world music.

Good examples include:

- | Dancing bells (India).
- | Kosika (Africa).
- | Seed Shakers (Peru).
- | Kalimba/thumb piano (Africa).
- | Rainstick (Chile).
- | Caxixi (Ivory Coast).

These instruments can be sourced easily from a selection of places such as music shops, market stalls, Oxfam shops or the internet. Pictures of larger or more expensive instruments can also be used.

## Activities using these instruments might include:

- | Pass to a beat – using these instruments the children can explore and experience the sounds these instruments make by passing the instruments around to the beat of 4, 3, 8 etc.
- | Rhythm circles – the class can play the instruments in call and response rhythm activities, break into different rhythm groups and then play together and separately or invent their own rhythms.
- | Project work – information on the history of the instrument, design, sound and country could be linked to the instrument in the form of

projects.

- | Composing – Children should be encouraged to incorporate these instruments into their composing work with other instruments.
- | Accompaniment – The instruments would be very suitable to accompany songs from around the world. A rhythmic ostinato (a repeated rhythm alongside the song) would be a good example of how to approach this.

## Listening

Children should be exposed to a wide and diverse selection of music from around the world. This selection may be obtained through CDs or downloaded through the internet.

Compilation CDs such as the *Rough Guide* music series and *Putumayo* are recommended. Various listening activities might include:

- | A movement, pictorial or creative writing response.
- | Discussion of tempo, timbre, pulse and structure.
- | Comparison of a few contrasting excerpts through discussion, movements, lists, pictures etc.
- | Keep pulse to music with hands, feet, head, etc.
- | Keep pulse with percussion instruments/ethnic instruments.
- | Compose own rhythm pattern to the music

## World story books

Stories from around the world are very useful to engage in world music. Suitable examples of books include *Bringing the Rain to Kapti Plain*, *Augustus and his Smile* and *Off we go to Mexico*. Activities might include:

- | In groups compose a piece of

music to illustrate parts of the story using voice and percussion or ethnic instruments.

- | Graphically notate the story in sequence on large pieces of paper. Children then follow the notation as they are recalling the story through a sequence of sound.
- | Compose simple song melodies on groups for certain parts of the story.
- | Compose a suitable piece of music to represent the different characters in the story.

## Travel agent brochures

Cutting out a wide variety of destination pictures from travel agent brochures is a very useful and free resource. Activities using these cuttings might include:

- | Travel agents – each group pretends they are travel agents trying to encourage people to visit certain countries. They musically provide a soundscape of the place they are advertising.
- | Each group is given different pictures of destinations. The

groups compose a piece of music to illustrate the places on the pictures using voice and percussion instruments.

## Integration

There is great potential when dealing with world music for integration with other curricular areas such as:

**English:** descriptive vocabulary, stories, creative writing.

**Geography:** different environments and cultures.

**History:** stories, time, attitudes to music

**Science:** exploring sound, control of sound, inventing sound.

**SPHE:** emotions in music, expression.

**PE:** movement response to music.

**Visual Arts:** visual response to music, exploring artwork from different countries.

**ICT:** project work on different countries, researching ethnic instruments.

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