

Midwest Clinic 2012, December 20th 9:30am

The packet is the physical version of the “resources” page of tohitthings.com. I highly recommend visiting the site as it contains links to videos and other information. The goal of this site is to provide teachers with the resources to expose their students to some types of Non-Western music. The cultures chosen here are ones that To Hit has gleaned influence from. The information presented here is in no way a complete picture of these vast musical traditions, but hopefully will provide enough information and resources to expose students and provide them with direction for future exploration.

May I suggest "World Music Fridays" where there may be a departure from the normal rehearsal schedule to do a bit of world traveling? A small talk about some of the main concepts, along with the recommended videos and discussion of student reactions would be a great addition to a school music program. It may even spark a deeper interest in some of the musical traditions of these cultures.

Exposure to Non-Western Music

Bio:

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To Hit:

Percussionists hit things. Whether it is in Michigan or the Middle East, India or Indiana, percussion is the art of hitting. For over a decade, Tim Mocny and Mike List have been students, performers, and educators of percussion. To Hit reflects the influences of the globalized culture they live in, blending the sounds of American Art and Pop music with the music of North India, the Middle-East, and Africa, creating a palette of sonic colors that spans continents.

Thanks to Central Michigan University for their assistance with this clinic!

North Indian

Key points / Lesson goals:

Raga, Tala, Drone, Lack of harmony, Use of sliding/bending notes

North Indian Music - Intro/Background

North Indian music (Hindustani music) is distinct from South Indian (Carnatic Music). It is actually fusion of Persian and Indian musical styles, created when Muslim empires expanded to control India. A prominent figure in this fusion was Amir Khusru (1253-1325, around the medieval ages in Europe). Classical Indian music was happening before this, giving you a sense of how old this tradition is. You can mention to your students that this musical style is a classical style that is probably older than the western music tradition.

North Indian music is constructed around melody forms called Raga and rhythmic cycles called Taal, with an underlying drone.

Raga -

Raga is a specific set of guidelines that direct how melodic motion happens. This is similar to a scale or mode, but not the same because it is more specific. It is a set of notes, like a scale or mode, but specific notes are skipped when going up or down, specific notes are always approached from above or below, and specific phrases are emphasized. It also dictates what scale degree is emphasized in melodies or improvisation. It is possible to have three different ragas with the same notes in them but the emphasis is on different scale degrees causing a different feeling (*rasa*). It is a very specific modal form that creates different moods. Because of the specific mood each rag elicits it is said that there is a specific time of day that each should be played at.

Drone -

Usually the root and 5th or other scale degree sustained by the tampura

Taal -

Taal is a rhythmic cycle used in Indian music. Arrival points and climactic moments occur at the beginning of the cycle called *sum*. Cadential moments are created through tension and release. In western music this tension is often created through harmonic dissonance resolving to consonance. Indian music does not use any specifically intended harmony and often uses rhythmic cadential forms called *tihais*. A *tihai* is a phrase that is repeated three times, with the last notes arriving on *sum*.

Sliding/Bending -

One of the striking characteristics of Indian music is the amount of sliding and ornamenting done between notes. This is found in the vocal style and is reflected in the instruments. For example, a sitar can bend a note up to a 4th or 5th.

Tabla Bols -

One very interesting aspect of tabla is that each different sound that the drum makes has a different syllable that corresponds to it. This creates a drumming language by which the art form is taught. It also becomes part of the performance.

Buy-Ali Akbar College of Music and Store is one of the few schools for Indian Music in North America. It also stocks instruments from beginner to professional levels.

www.aacmstore.org

Learn -chandrakuns.com has a tremendous amount of information and a list of Indian music teachers all over the world by country and state. This is where Mike first looked for tabla teachers.

Names to look for

Sitar

Ravi Shankar
Vilayat Khan
Nikhil Banerjee
Shahid Parvez

Tabla

Zakir Hussain
Allah Rakha Khan
Swapan Chatterjee
Anindo Chatterjee
Sharda Sahai

Sarod

Ali Akbar Khan
Amjed Ali Khan

Sarang

Sultan Khan

Vocal

Shruti Sadolikar
Bhimsen Joshi
Jasraj Joshi
Prabha Atre
Umakant Gundecha and
Ramakant Gundecha

Bansuri

Hariprasad Chaurasia

Mbira**Key points / Lesson goals:**

Timbre, Aesthetics of sound, Polyphony, Hocket, Choose your own listening adventure

Intro / Background -

Mbira DzaVadzimu (Za-va(d)-Zee-mu) which means "voice of the ancestors," is native to the Shona people of Southern Africa that are primarily located in modern day Zimbabwe. The instrument is made of prongs attached to a board, and usually has some sort of buzzing mechanism like bottle caps, shells or beads. I have heard it said that the board represents the earth, the prongs represent the people moving about, and the buzzing represents the spiritual world. I have also heard that the three octaves of voices represent men, women and children.

Names to look for

Forward Kwenda
Comas Magaya
Ephat Mujuru
Fradreck Muguru
Tute Chigamba
Mhuri Yekwa Rwizi
Leonard Magaya
Simon Mashoko
Erica Azim
B. Michael Williams
Joel Laviolette

Timbre -

Students may not initially like the buzzy timbre caused by the bottle caps. It was described to me by Erica Azim as being like the difference between silk and velvet. Both are beautiful fabrics. Silk is very smooth and velvet has lots of texture to it. The Western aesthetic of sound often favors the smooth silky sound (unless of course you are playing distorted electric guitar...) but the African aesthetic prefers all that extra texture to it. Both are beautiful, just different.

Speaking of electric guitar, the mbira is usually amplified by being placed in a hollowed out gourd called a *deze* and wedged in place with a stick. This makes the instrument incredibly louder. Often, additional bottle caps are attached to the *deze* for even more buzzing.

Polyphony, Hocket, Choose your own listening adventure -

Mbira music usually has multiple musical lines happening simultaneously that are repeated in a cyclical fashion. There are typically two parts to a traditional mbira composition, each played on one of a pair of instruments, creating interlocking melodies. Sometimes the parts are different, and sometimes they are the same part but one player shifts what he is playing over an "8th" note from the pulse to fall in the "holes" of the first part, essentially doubling every note. This makes the already polyphonic lines even more complicated.

One of the beauties of this is that performers and listeners can choose their own listening experience, while listening to the same repeated musical material. They can listen to the high line, or the bass line, or composite lines from the two parts. Or they could listen to the different rhythms that the buzzing makes depending on what variations are happening and what the players are accenting. Without changing the actual material that is being played a lot of different things can be heard. In a group setting, people traditionally sing and clap out some of the lines that they hear.

Mbira DzaVadzimu music is used in religious ceremonies called *bira* where music is played, and people dance and drink beer. This is an effort to call on an ancestor to possess a medium so that they can pay tribute or ask questions. Because they want to play music that the ancestors know, it is important in mbira music to keep an old repertoire alive and active, as opposed to creating new pieces.

Read- [The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe](#) by Paul Berliner.

This is THE ethnomusicology book on mbira.

Buy- mbira.org is run by [Erica Azim](#) and is a "non-profit organization that celebrates and helps to sustain the ancient musical traditions of Zimbabwe." They do a great job of getting money back to makers, musicians, and their families in a country that is not easy to make a living in. You can buy an mbira from them and they also have a lot of recordings and resources for learning. Erica has devoted her life to mbira and is a great advocate for the traditional art form.

Learn- [Learning Mbira, A Beginning...](#) By [B. Michael Williams](#)

A great book if you want to start learning to play mbira, this book contains many standard tunes in a simple tablature notation system. Williams also has additional pieces and parts sold separately on his website.

Arabic**Key points / Lesson goals**

Ornamentation, Heterophony, Quarter tones, *Maqam*, *Iqa*, *Taqasim*

Heterophony -

Much of Arabic Music is very linear, meaning that there are not a lot of different parts going on and often if there is an extra line, like a bass line, it is outlining the main melody.

But something that makes it interesting is the use of ornamentation and different people simultaneously using different ornamentation that creates the aesthetic.

Heterophony is when people play the same melody but vary and ornament it in slightly different ways. I sometimes think of it as people walking down the same path but in a gaggle, as opposed to walking in strict follow-the-leader, which could be looked at as monophony. If you wanted to do some visual representation of this you could have a few kids follow a leader walking in a single file line, then have them follow the same path, but walk in a blob and all take slightly different paths.

Maqam -

Maqam is the modal system of Arabic music and can sound particularly exotic because of the use of quarter-tones. If you picture tuning a red key between the white and black keys of the piano, the red key is the quarter-tone. This is a simplified way to describe it; it is not as simple as dividing the frequency in half because some tones are just a little flat and some are more flat. It is also worth noting that this does not mean that their scale is 24 notes. Maqams are often still only based on 12 notes but certain accidentals will be half flat.

Iqa -

Iqa are the rhythms that Arabic music is based on. They are defined by a skeletal low and high pattern, which is ornamented to match the melody. These come in a variety of time signatures, including many lilting odd meters.

Taqasim -

Improvisation (or *taqasim*) is an important part of Arabic music. Improvisation can happen in both a solo setting, with accompaniment, or as a part of a composition. One characteristic of this style of improvisation is a soaring arrhythmic quality that floats over time. Another aspect of *taqasim* is finding ways of modulating from one maqam to another.

Names to look for**'Ud**

Simon Saheen
Marcel Khalifa
Munir Bashir
Andre Hajj
Farid al Atrash
Issa Boulos

Vocal

Umm Kulthum
Fairuz
Mohammed Abdel Wahab
Abdul Halim
Sabah Fakhri
Rahbani Brothers
Sayed Darwish

Nay

Bassam Saba
Nadeem Dlaikan
Samir Siblini

Qanun

Gilbert Yammine

Percussion

Michel Merhej Baklouk
Ali Khatib

Learn

maqamworld.com is a great resource for information and resources on Arabic music.