



Four Immigrant Groups: Their Lives and Music

Curriculum Unit 96.04.02
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INTRODUCTION: PERSONAL IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCES AND MISCONCEPTIONS

As early as I can remember, my grandmother said to me “Don’t talk with foreigners.” I said, “Grandmother, aren’t we all foreigners in this country?” There was no reply. As I grew up in a small town in western New York, I learned that people were identified as “others,”—Italian, German, or catholic, and people of other races were not even to be seen until I went to a music school in Buffalo as a young teenager. Because of my father’s job in a factory, my family moved to West Virginia when I was 16, and I experienced “alienation” and “separation.”

I had the experience of the immigrant—I was constantly thought of as different in my physical appearance and speech; I was an oddity. Later on, as a music student and professional, I met people from other countries and cultures, both as a student in Baltimore, New Haven, and a student in Paris for one year. I traveled around many countries in Europe, and I learned first hand about cultures and ways of life different from my own.

My experience in Paris as well as in the ’68 Olympics in Mexico taught me the anger that other peoples felt for my country’s participation in the Vietnam war; I had been too sheltered in a narrow musical world to become involved politically. My perspective on the world grew by leaps and bounds from these experiences, particularly from living in the Olympic village. From another perspective, I knew a little of how Richard Rodriguez felt after he achieved his degrees—his family was proud; yet such education caused a difference in the relation to his family as he described in “Hunger of Memory.” (1)

My special interest in participating in the immigration course was to have my students experience some of the music from the Caribbean region, as part of their awareness of black history, and the musical elements that have “immigrated” to us from Africa through this region. As I studied about the problems of immigration, my perspective changed from just teaching some music, to one of incorporating the problems of immigrants, which we all have faced in some degree in our lives, with that music.

I was very surprised at what I learned from taking this immigration course. I was shocked at the “talking from both sides of the mouth” which goes on. In the book “Shadowed Lives,”(2) one reads about the horrible conditions under which Mexican workers crossed the border, and lived, and the negative image portrayed by the media as people that are diseased, criminal, lazy, etc. The truth is that they just want to make income to

survive and send home money to family members, since economic conditions are so difficult in their hometown. The employers consider them dependable and hard working, and depend upon their labor to maintain their agricultural businesses.

Another example of “two sides of the mouth” would be the requiring of documentation of Mexican workers, yet looking the other way if these documents are not honestly filled out, or saying that they are going to patrol the borders, but fail to come up with the funds necessary to do this. The legislators want to please the restrictionists, and at the same time the employers who need these workers. Thus, the Bracero program was initiated earlier this century, and some years ago, the guest worker provision, to allow temporary migrant workers into this country. Proposition 187 now in California is anti-family with no health or prenatal care, or aid for the elderly. Just what the employers have wanted all along; no benefits or insurances to pay out, just a low salary for these people!

It is important to see that immigrants are used as scapegoats in times of economic downturns. For example, California employed people related to the military, and when these jobs were gone, and a peace time economy was in place, immigrants were immediately the scapegoat, and people demanded measures such as Proposition 187.

The attitude of the government towards immigrants in the last century was also very surprising to me. For example, the reference to European immigrants in the nineteenth century as “cows” and valued only in terms of money, was what our economy needed! The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and Immigration Naturalization Act of 1924 resulted in biased admissions favoring northern and western Europeans. It is hard to believe that it wasn't until 1965 the amendments were made to repeal the national origins quotas. The more recent immigration laws have made a standard for all countries, as well as reuniting family members first.(3)

I was shocked to discover how the media is misleading. There was an article in a newspaper about Green Valley, California, where some of the Mexicans had lived; it caused great dissension among the community and verbal attacks on the Mexican workers, and finally the health department closed it down. The media also exaggerated the problems of Cuban immigrants in recent times; they emphasized the criminal element in these people, which was not true. Only about 2% had committed what we consider crimes.

Clearly there seems to be a dual policy; one to give to citizens to quell their fears, and another to employers to satisfy their needs. The media seizes on minute, negative images, and without care uses immigrants to exploit their needs.

The misconceptions about immigrants need to be addressed. Restrictionists say immigration is bad for our country, in that we are being inundated, they take away jobs, use welfare, and will not learn English.

∅There is a ratio of 1 foreign born to 14 native born; 15% were foreign born from 1870-1920, and in 1990, 8.5%.(4)

∅4 of 10 Mexican immigrants are undocumented, and only the higher classes get visas easily in Latin America.(5)

∅Problems exist because of racism in this country; 70% of immigrants and refugees in recent years are from Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Philippines, China, India, and Taiwan, in contrast to earlier immigrants predominantly from Europe.(6)

∅Many Koreans in Los Angeles are self-employed, and create jobs for others; Mexicans pride themselves on their hard work and reliability, and do not desire welfare.(7)

From 1980 to 1990 people who said that they did not speak English well rose from only 5 to 6%, with a higher percentage in Los Angeles and New York; thousands of people are waiting to take English as a second language in California.(8) The pluralistic attitude favors retaining certain traits, and views them as a resource; knowing a second language has been shown to increase academic ability, and provide a sense of pride, and keep a connection with the country of origin. The bilingual program, mandated by the Supreme Court in 1974, helps disadvantaged children to prepare for English, and at the same time keeps their sense of identity and self-esteem, so needed in their adjustment to a new country. They can retain one foot in each country, so to speak.

By studying immigrants-what pushed them, was it voluntary or involuntary, what were the pains and risks, what were their experiences in the host country, both good and bad, and how did they feel or not feel incorporated in the new society, we are impelled to ask ourselves to question the motives behind laws dealing with immigration, to communicate more effectively with our immigrant neighbors, and to read articles with more critical evaluation.

By taking a pluralistic view of our society, we can respect the value of ethnicity for immigrants. We have to also realize that multiculturalism alone is not going to correct the problems of discrimination in our country; it is a beginning, but the more important goal is to educate our peers and students to correct the stereotypes of different peoples as portrayed in the media, as well as to inform them of the baseless fears surrounding the new immigrants.

UNIT GOALS AND STRUCTURE

By incorporating more of the truths about immigrants to my students, along with the music of different Caribbean countries, I hope to impart knowledge which will influence more responsible behavior and an attitude of respect in our society towards immigrants and their music.

The vehicle I have chosen for my presentation will be a dialogue between a student and imaginary immigrants. My music classes meet for two half-hours per week; this unit will be scheduled for eight weeks in February and March of next year.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. My students in New Haven are mostly disadvantaged African-Americans. They need to increase their knowledge and understanding of geography, different peoples, events, history, and languages in order to develop a sense of the world around them. By means of a dialogue between selected students and imaginary immigrants from Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Cuba, my fourth grade students will learn about the countries, lives and music of these four immigrant groups. They will understand what it means to be an immigrant; why people left their countries, what made their countries special to them, how have they adapted to the new one, thus developing more respect for different groups of people in our society.
2. By using music as a common thread, students will learn to enjoy, to participate in, and appreciate the music of different peoples. They will learn the roots of different music from these countries, and what music has “immigrated” to the United States. They will understand the role of music in the country of origin, as well as in the immigrants’ new life.
3. Twenty-one student activities will include listening to music from different Latin countries or styles, and being able to identify the repeating and contrasting sections, style (steel band and calypso, plena, salsa, meringue, rumba, Miami sound, contemporary Dominican Republican, reggae), instruments, and understand the lyrics used.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CARIBBEAN (See student activity #1)

Although originally created in Trinidad, steel bands are popular throughout the Caribbean. There can be up to 100 players and 300 of these drums, made out of different sized oil drums.

As music of a steel band is playing, my fourth grade students will locate Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Trinidad on a map in front of the classroom. They will write two or more paragraphs about their families; where they’re from, or if they have lived here all their lives, or if they have ever moved, and what it was like.

FOCUS I: PUERTO RICAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR MUSIC

TEACHER: Let’s imagine that we take a trip to New York and Miami, and visit four families, each from either Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, or Cuba. We’ll first visit a family in Brooklyn, New York, home to many Puerto Ricans for several decades.

INTERVIEWER: Where is your country? What is its population and history?

IMMIGRANT: Puerto Rico is an island in the West Indies between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The Dominican Republic is west, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are east. It is a self-

governing commonwealth associated with the United States, with a population of about 3 million. After its conquest and settlement by the Spaniard in 1508, it was held by Spain until 1898, when the United States took it over after the Spanish-American War. Spanish and English are both spoken, and the major religion is Roman-Catholic.

INTERVIEWER: What was it like to live there as a child?

IMMIGRANT: Many years ago, I lived in a small rectangular hut made of corrugated metal sheets on stilts, hovering in the middle of a circle of red dirt, without running water and electricity, in the country. Even though we studied “jibaro” (country people) poems and Stories in school, these people were looked down upon as ignorant, and having no manners; I was told not to call myself a “jibaro.”

INTERVIEWER 1: What kind of food did you eat? What was your family like?

IMMIGRANT: I ate rice and red beans a lot, with salted codfish and onions. As part of a large family, and the oldest child, I had to help take care of my brothers and sisters. I had aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents not too far away. I enjoyed visiting them. The countryside and the beaches were very beautiful. Since the climate is between 70-80 degrees all year round, we could play outside most of the time. We had a hard time getting enough money to buy basic foods, as my father wouldn't come home sometimes for days, or was unemployed. My mother got a job sewing in a factory nearby. We moved quite a bit on the island, to the city, and then back to the country, as my mother tried to provide for us.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you come to New York?

IMMIGRANT. We moved to New York to live with my relatives, so my mother could find some work there, but she was given the most menial type of work simply because she had just arrived from Puerto Rico. Often she would be laid off and I had to help her get welfare, which she did not want. She was very proud of her sewing work.

INTERVIEWER: What was it like for you in New York?

IMMIGRANT: I had a very hard time when I came to New York. I had to stay indoors in this apartment building that was not kept up very well. There were always locks on big black doors, and garbage strewn outside. I could not stand the noise. In school, they put me back one grade, even though I had outstanding grades in my school at home. Because I couldn't speak English that well, they thought that I couldn't read and write it either. The Puerto Ricans that had lived in New York for some time would not associate with me; neither would the African-Americans, who thought that my family was taking jobs from them. I could not understand this, because I am a mixture of African and Spanish, and many of my relatives are black skinned; we all thought of ourselves as a mixed people, and accepted everyone. The Italian students sat separately also. I also saw Jewish people for the first time. I was often laughed at, because I couldn't speak English well. I used to hate living here, and felt that we were having the same economic problems as home, but that we were almost living in a jail, compared to where we were in Puerto Rico. My mother finally got a better job, and was able to provide for my brothers and sisters. One of them went to college.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of music did you have, and what do you like here?

IMMIGRANT: Music was very important to us at home; we sang special kinds of songs called *plenas*, *bombas*, and for Christmas, *aguinaldos* with guitar and percussion accompaniment. My heritage is African and Spanish; the music combines elements from both parts of these worlds—the high plaintive singing of the Puerto Rican hill farmers, the *jibaros* or country people and a guitar, the *cuatro*, from the Spanish, and the rhythms, percussion instruments, and call and response patterns between soloist and chorus from the early African slaves.

The plena, a song form of verse-and-refrain, is often satirical and political, with some percussion accompaniment. It was a song that was accompanied with the cuatro and guitar, and sung by farmers after a long days work. Another type of song, called the bomba, is a dance and musical style of strongly African nature, and is performed with two or three drums. The jibaro or country music's influence is found in vocal inflections and phrasings used by Puerto Rican singers. (See student activity #2)

We listened to the popular types of latin music on the radio, such as boleros and chachachas. Our Puerto Rican music combined with Cuban music and big band jazz in the Latin barrios of New York in the 60's, and was called "Salsa." Today it is a global music, and popular across North and South America, the Caribbean, in Europe, and also Japan. It has slightly different "flavors" wherever it is played. I hear it a lot in New York. I'd like you to dance with me to a salsa piece "Guarere," by Ray Barretto.

Ray Barretto is called "The King of the Congas." He has recorded with many famous groups and jazz musicians. He was raised in Spanish Harlem, and is a good exponent of the Puerto Rican self determination, and self-help philosophy. His lyrics are always full of positive thoughts. His band has performed all over the world. (See student activity #3 and #4)

FOCUS II: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR MUSIC (See student activities #5 and #6)

INTERVIEWER: Where is your country? What is its history?

IMMIGRANT: My name is Lidia. I am 56 years of age, and my family is from the Dominican Republic. This country occupies the eastern two thirds of the island of Hispaniola, the other third being Haiti, in the Caribbean. It was the first island to be colonized by Spain. Thus, the Spanish language was used, and most Dominicans belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. Santo Domingo, its capital, was founded in 1496, where a university was established by the early Spaniards. The Dominicans declared their independence in 1844, more from Haiti than Spain. A violent history after this time included ruthless dictators and revolutionary anarchy. Despite these misfortunes, this nation has been favored with varied agricultural production by small producers, thus eliminating dependence on one crop and the domination of foreign-controlled interests. Such crops as cocoa, coffee, and sugar have been important. The terrain is dominated by a central mountain chain and several lesser ranges. The climate is warm, and moderated by constant trade winds from the Atlantic, and well suited for agriculture.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you live here, and what made you come?

IMMIGRANT: I have lived here in Washington Heights, in New York, like most Dominicans that have emigrated to the U.S. My family came from the Dominican Republic when I was 22. Before that time, the dictator Trujillo had not allowed people to emigrate. In the early 60's he was assassinated. A politically volatile period ensued. There were coups, and finally the U.S. intervention, before the fighting was quelled. Over 9,000 people began to emigrate each year, fearing the political situation, and facing unemployment, or very low pay. There was no future in the Dominican Republic; there was not even a job for people with college degrees; they came here for a better life. The United States also encouraged Dominicans to leave, making visas somewhat easier to obtain, in order to have agitators leave the country, and generally improve relations between the two countries. Visa applicants had to fill out complex procedural forms, and have money and social contacts to obtain a visa, a symbol of great prestige; thus, only mostly middle class Dominicans were able to come here in the beginning.

INTERVIEWER: How did you find a job?

IMMIGRANT: My uncle was the pioneer of the “cadena,” or the chain that linked my family. He had come here first, and worked in a seafood factory. He got me a job there. He also got many of his friends jobs in manufacturing, the garment industry, or retail and wholesale trades. One owned his own bodega (grocery store), but spent many hours at his store, and was held up a couple of times. My uncle didn’t like that kind of a job. People in the Dominican Republic do not realize how hard it is to survive here; they think everyone makes lots of money, such as they see in the advertisements to encourage migration.

INTERVIEWER: How hard was it to come here, to get a visa? Did you have a good job?

IMMIGRANT: My uncle got my father a work visa, as his employer said he needed more immigrant workers. Later, my mother and brothers came on resident visas, for family reunification. Every family member and friend contributed to the well being of all the immigrants, and sent money home to our cousins and friends in need. In the beginning, we were making a decent income, but then, there was a decline in manufacturing jobs and an economic recession in the 80’s, and many Dominicans lost their jobs, or were laid off for some time. Now there is great poverty.

INTERVIEWER: How do you like it here? Do you feel part of this country?

IMMIGRANT: It seems a lot like the Dominican Republic here; we have newspapers, bodegas that have our traditional foods, such as plantains, and restaurants serving Dominican specialties. Places are named as they are in the Dominican Republic, for example “Quisqueya (Dominican) Heights.” My family, as most Dominicans, have been active in education, voting for members of the school boards, one being principal of a public school, and another even having been elected to the New York City Council (Linares). The Catholic church also played a big role in the life of my family and friends; this institution helped us adjust to this country-everyone was involved in the church!

INTERVIEWER: What special problems do you face today?

IMMIGRANT: Dominicans have many problems today. There is discrimination because of their color; they are often called “Black” like African Americans. This term has a negative connotation in the Dominican Republic; only the Haitians are called “Black,” and are disdained by the society. Dominicans consider themselves descendants of the Spanish and indigenous populations.

There are so many tensions with Puerto Ricans who say Dominicans take jobs for lower pay, and African-Americans, who feel that the Dominicans are foreign merchants taking advantage of the economic conditions of disadvantaged people. Drug dealing is also a problem, particularly with cocaine; young people see a great need to “succeed,” and, unfortunately, some use this way to demonstrate their “success.”

INTERVIEWER: How different are the cultures?

IMMIGRANT: Cultural differences have disrupted many families. Families in the Dominican Republic are commonly patriarchal; that is, the senior male is the head of the household, and is the authority figure-he supports the family. The wife’s place is in the home. The man has special privileges. The wife is given a small allowance. The transition in New York to a two income household has presented problems, and changes have had to take place, not only in the budget, but also in sharing household chores. My parents gradually worked out their problems. Some couples divorced, because of the great disruptions in social practices that have occurred. Even though women are making money, they most often consider it supplemental and supportive of their husband’s income.

Another difference in the two cultures is the raising of children. Girls can be publicly disciplined in the Dominican Republic. Parents fear the child abuse laws in this country, and do not feel free to discipline their children. The sons have been given more liberty to socialize

outside the home; the girls have been protected, or, if they go out, to be chaperoned.

INTERVIEWER: How have Dominicans adjusted?

IMMIGRANT: A very important factor in adjusting to this country is the ability to have a foothold in both places.

With communications and travel so different than at the turn of the century, it is easy for Dominicans to be both “here” and “there.” Also, today, there is more tolerance of multiculturalism, and courses have been added in the public school curriculum that educate students more about the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean countries. Another factor that contributes to the transnationalism is the economy; some Dominicans do business both in their country of origin and New York. The family feels more stable to be able to seek employment in two economies; if one is poor, the other may have good opportunities. They also feel appreciated for their achievements in their own country, as opposed to how they feel valued by white, mainstreamed America.

INTERVIEWER: What is your music like, and what kind of music do you have?

IMMIGRANT: Music and dancing are important to the Dominican people. As children, we heard merengues and boleros played on the radio; children danced at our school frequently. There was always dancing in the bars and dance halls. People commonly sang.(9)

The music of the Dominican Republic is rich in both Hispanic and African styles, but the only form that made a mark in the United States was the meringue, a country dance with a marked-sometimes almost polka-like-2/4 time. The early 50’s saw the popularity of this music in New York, when Angel Vilorio organized a group playing the traditional rural style associated with the northern Dominican province of Cibao. The basic dance

was incorporated into a permanent part of social dances, its brisk, sideways-stepping two-step swing being relatively easy to master.

The basic country meringue group consisted of accordion, a distinctive metal guiro scraper, and a double-ended barrel-shaped drum called a tambora, played with a stick and muted with one hand. A saxophone was also common. Meringue was very popular during the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, who held power from 1930 until his assassination in 1961. It became a symbol of national pride; large meringue orchestras were developed, with piano and brass to cater to the new audiences. Political themes were not expressed, however.

Despite the later change of instruments made after 1960, such as the use of electric guitar, keyboards and synthesizer, as heard in the famous Dominican Republic musician Juan Luis Guerra's band "4:40," the rhythm of meringue has changed very little. The tambora keeps a fast pulse going, working around conga patterns, while a bass drum, operated with a foot pedal provides a monotonous thumping 1234 beat. Dancing routines occur along with usually 3 vocalists, who swap the lead part with dancing. Guerra studied literature in Santo Domingo and his lyrics reflect enthusiasm for poets like Neruda and Vallejo. He states that:

"Meringue-along with bachata-is the traditional folk music of the Dominican Republic. It is popular in local bars and dancehalls. My group, "4:40," has changed both the sound and the lyrics. We include social and political themes as well as the traditional love themes. We have blended elements of jazz into our music. We've modernized the traditional meringue, but we want to play music that appeals to everyone at home, and use lyrics that they can identify with, such as the words to "A Visa for a Dream." (10) *(See student activities #7 and #8)*

FOCUS III: CUBAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR MUSIC (See student activities #9 and #10)

INTERVIEWER 1: Where is your country? What is it like? What do you export?

IMMIGRANT: I was born and grew up near Havana, Cuba. I emigrated with my family to Miami. Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean Sea, and less than 100 miles south of Florida. Its capital is Havana. It is called the "Pearl of the Antilles," because it is so beautiful. It has mountains and rolling hills, gentle slopes and grasslands, and a coastline with sandy beaches and coral reefs. The semitropical climate is stable and comfortable with cool ocean breezes, and sometimes violent hurricanes around August and September. The exports include sugar, coffee, and citrus fruits. Common foods include rice and beans, sugar cane, and root crops like cassava and sweet potatoes.

INTERVIEWER: What is its history?

IMMIGRANT: It became a colony of Spain in the fifteenth century, and remained so until 1898, when the U.S. helped defeat Spain; slavery ended at this time. Thus, Spanish was the public language, and the Roman Catholic church was predominant. The dictator Batista ruled from 1930-1959. Castro overthrew this regime and set up the Cuban Communist Party. Initially, there were benefits for the people, especially for the African-Cuban population. Integration and better living conditions were promoted. However, as Cuba became a socialist state, the economy suffered, and food was rationed. People sought refuge in the United States. Thirty years of political migration brought over 1 million Cubans here, each wave or group from a different background, and given different opportunities here, depending on when they came.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you come to the U.S.?

IMMIGRANT: My father worked for a food processing business owned by the United States. When the Castro revolution occurred in 1959, we had to leave, as he began to nationalize companies.

We were literally pushed out of the country. I was a teenager then, and always thought that I would be returning home, when the political and economic climates were improved.

INTERVIEWER: How were you helped as an immigrant? Were other Cubans helped as much?

IMMIGRANT: The U.S. began a trade embargo, cut the sugar quota, and backed the exile invasion of Cuba, the Bay of Pigs, a tragic mistake, to overthrow Castro. Diplomatic ties were cut to Cuba. However, we were helped by the U.S. Cuban Refugee Program. Later, my relatives came over on the President Johnson's "Freedom Flights." Two other groups that came were the Marielitos, who came from Mariel Harbor, and who were portrayed as undesirable, yet found to be mostly young men, of African ancestry, and mostly from the mainstream of the Cuban economy. They had jobs as carpenters, machine operators, or bus or truck drivers, for example. After the collapse of communism in Europe, the economic crises became so bad, that another group of immigrants came, the Balseros, who came on rafts, or other makeshift vessels, risking death. Many died at sea. However welcome these two groups were in Miami, they were the poor Cubans, and, as such, were in the same status as before, in relation to the upper middle class Cubans. Life was not easy for them. Abrupt policy changes by the U.S. government changed Cuban's refugee status; a new agreement allows 20,000 visas a year, and Cubans can no longer claim refugee status.

INTERVIEWER: What was it like in Miami?

IMMIGRANT: Because we immigrated in the 60's, and went to Miami, life was very good. We were the white immigrants. This city is home to a Cuban enclave; over 25,000 businesses are owned by Hispanics, including banks, insurance companies, and shipping firms. Because we brought resources, such as money, skills, and education, concentrated in one place, and were helped by the U.S. government, both in aid, and in having a direct line to the centers of political power, we succeeded in establishing our own community. We continued to maintain Spanish as the public language, and were able to offer jobs to the new immigrants from latin countries. Cubans have become mayors, and have been elected to the City Commission, and the U.S. House of Representatives.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had any special problems?

IMMIGRANT: I have experienced African-American antagonism, due to the business success of our people here, and the social distance created by the enclave. Also, I have seen much racial discrimination towards the Afro-Cubans by society in general.

INTERVIEWER: What was the music like in Cuba?

IMMIGRANT: Music is said to be Cuba's greatest export; the famous Cuban singer Celia Cruz says that " salsa (now a popular global music) is Cuban music with another name—son, rumba, mambo, and chachacha.""(11) Such musicians have an important role as immigrants attempt to maintain their identity. Their songs would include references to themes that we can relate to, such as the beauty of the land, or particular religious symbols, or they refer to situations in our home country that we can identify with.

Cuban music has both African and Spanish roots. The African roots of Cuban music include not only rhythms, but the use of percussion instruments, call and response styles in the singing, and incorporation of some aspects of Afro-Cuban religions, such as Santeria. Its Spanish roots are heard in the guitar style and as explained in Puerto Rican music the high plaintive singing style of the hill farmers, as well as the Spanish ten-line decima verses and southern Spanish melody.

Around 1840, slaves from the West African countries of Nigeria, Cameroon, Benin, and the Congo made up half the population; Afro-Cuban religions were practiced. The slave trade from Africa lasted in Cuba until 1900, the time of the Spanish-American war. African musical ideas remained stronger here than anywhere else. Yoruba and Congolese religious cults, and the Abakwa secret society from eastern Nigeria remained powerful throughout the island.

Today the Santeria religion reveres African deities combined with Catholic saints for respectability. Dances and music are performed in honor of these deities—each has its own color; Chango, spirit of war and fire red, Oshun, goddess of love and water is yellow. Their Christian counterparts are St. Barbara and Virgen de las Caridad del Cobre, patron saint of Cuba. Each deity has rhythms played by the hourglass-shaped bata drums and shekere rattles. The music for religious rituals is the heartbeat of Cuban music. It has great physical and emotional power over its participants. *(See student activity #11)*

The influence of Cuban music on the music of the United States has been one of the greatest, most varied, and longest lasting of the countries of the Caribbean. The “habanera” was the first Cuban style that influenced music in the United States. It derived from the contradanza, a Spanish version of line dance. Afro-Cubans added a “lift” or “swing” to it, and spread into other forms of music. *(See student activity #12)*

The Cuban style that had the most direct impact of our music was very different from this habanera. The “son,” basis of the 30’s rumba craze, is considered the first rhythm invented by the Cubans. It began as a rural form accompanied by percussion; its newness was a sense of polyrhythm (several rhythms at the same time) with a unity of tempo (pace of beat). They added a marimbula (African bass instrument), maracas, claves, bongo, and later conga and trumpets. Americans were exposed to Cuban music in Havana, a resort city. Cuban and Puerto Rican music, and American jazz styles were blended in the 60’s in New York to create what is called “salsa.”

Mongo Santamaria (from Cuba) has been called the “Master of the Conga,” one of the finest percussionists in the world. His grandfather came from Africa. In the 70’s he came to New York with a traveling revue, and was immediately hired by a band there; later he formed his own band, and his music became famous; he performed around the world. *(See student activity #13)*

The basic building block of Cuban music is the “clave,” a 3-2 or a 2-3 rhythmic pattern, which is fundamental to the music. It has a strong first part, and answering second part, like the call-and-response structure common in African music. Almost all Cuban styles display this blend of musical elements. *(See student activity #14)*

The rumba is for voices and percussion, with its roots in religion. There are 3 types, the yambu, guaguanco, and columbia, slow, somewhat faster, and the last a solo male dance and most acrobatic. Rhythms include claves that play the pattern “the clave” which begins the rumba. The instruments include the cata, a wooden drum played with sticks, the maruga, an iron shaker, conga drums, wooden packing cases, and bata drums (3 double-skinned drums of Yoruba). The form of the rumba is a long lyrical vocal melody by a soloist or duet with muttering drums. With a cue, the rhythm tightens up, the chorus joins in a call and response section, and

the quinto, the lead drummer, improves wildly under the singer's inspirations. (See student activities #15, #16, #17, and #18)

FOCUS POUR: JAMAICAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR MUSIC

INTERVIEWER: What is your country like? What does it produce?

IMMIGRANT: Jamaica is 90 miles south of Cuba at a crossroads of key commercial routes. The Arawak Indians, the original inhabitants of the island, called it the "Island of Springs" or Xamayca. It was a British colony for 300 years, and became independent in 1962. It is the third largest island in the West Indies, and has beaches on the north side. Because it has an attractive, warm climate, and plains that rise to a mountainous backbone in the center, it is inviting to tourists. Kingston is the capital. This country is noted for its coffee. Its religions include Rastafarians, Protestants, and Catholics. There is an exuberance of natural vegetation, including mahogany and cedar wood. Over 90% of its people are descended from slaves.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of music is popular in Jamaica?

IMMIGRANT: Jamaica is known as a very loud island. On any night, you can hear many sound systems playing music, religious revival sessions, Maroon and Kumina possession ceremonies (remnants of African religions), and old-time mento dances. Most Jamaicans are descendants of slaves; as plantation workers, they were extremely repressed under the old British government; however, a strong folk tradition emerged on the island. The roots of this music could be described as a mixture of African, British, Irish and Spanish musical traditions. There is the traditional Jamaican wit and creativity in the texts of the songs.

The Rastafarian religion, popular in the 60's and 70's, includes about 13% of the population today, and with it the music Reggae, which has been a great influence in the country, and in American pop music. Every reggae musician emerged from that religion. Bob Marley was a most famous reggae musician. The lyrics of this music expressed peoples dissatisfaction with the situation in Jamaica. With the turmoil of politics in the 70's, someone attempted to assassinate him. As the country headed for civil war, Marley gave an historical performance in 1978 that symbolically linked the arms of opposing leaders Manley and Edward Seaga together in a song "One Love."

Modern reggae output is overwhelming. "There is a greater output of recorded music in Jamaica than in any other country in the world. This is because right from the beginning the different manufacturing and distribution companies in Jamaica opened their facilities for individual producers." (12) Many people made and distributed their own records. (See student activities # 19, #20, and #21)

INTERVIEWER: We have a family in our school from Jamaica. The mother has come to visit us, and tell us more about Jamaica, and why she left the country, and what were her experiences in New Haven.

SUMMARY

What is American culture? We know it is freedom of expression, but for whom is it the land of opportunity? Who does the law of the land protect? There has been a continual racial problem between “we”, the European white population, and “they”, the people of color, first as slaves from Africa. The Civil Rights Movement of the 60’s was instrumental in focusing on all races being treated equally in society, along with the Chicano and Indian Movements at that time.

The United States has been experiencing a major wave of immigration, mostly by peoples of color. In the past, assimilation has been the most influential belief system, or the “melting pot.” Today, we must take a pause, with the outrage from nativists, and legislation such as Proposition 187 in California, to take a look at the pluralistic view; that is, viewing American society as a collection of ethnic and racial minority groups, and a majority group of European Americans. We must respect each ethnic group, and allow them to celebrate their culture. We must view ethnicity as an asset, not a liability, particularly in politics. We must all be aware of the truths of these new immigrants, as expressed in each immigrant’s interview-the push and pull that brought this person to the United States.

Immigration created multiracial and multicultural nations; it has been voluntary or involuntary, and herein lies the distinction. European settlers to this country was mostly voluntary; African-American settlers were coerced and enslaved, as were the Puerto Ricans, who were originally won in conquest and annexed to this country. Refugees who escaped persecution have also been coerced. Events were not of their making. The debate today is whether immigrants constitute a burden to this country, or do they contribute more than they cost; this causes them to be the scapegoats for America’s problems. We must educate our students and peers as to the facts of this debate, and not rely on the distortions of the media.

The fourth grade students of my schools have participated in a dialogue with imaginary immigrants from Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica. They have learned a little bit about each country’s geography and history, and the push and pull of emigrating-why did these people leave, how hard was it for them here, and what things did they have to change.

They expanded their understanding of different peoples by participating in different styles of music of countries in the Caribbean, and some crossover American styles-the habanera rhythm, a steel band, salsa, contemporary popular Latin songs, a Cuban rumba, a Dominican Republic meringue, a Puerto Rican plena, and the chachacha.

UNIT STUDENT ACTIVITIES

PUERTO RICO, CUBA, JAMAICA, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AND TRINIDAD

STUDENT ACTIVITY 1: Students will listen to a steel band/calypso style music as they locate these Caribbean countries on the map; they will identify and improvise the claves, guiro, conga, and bongos, instruments used in these countries.

PUERTO RICO

STUDENT ACTIVITY 2: Students will clap the beat to a plena by the group Tacuafan.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 3: Students will listen to and improvise movement to salsa music by the Puerto Rican Ray Barretto, "Guarere."

STUDENT ACTIVITY 4: Students will learn the song "La Paloma Se Fue," in both Spanish and English. Maracas, a conga drum, and the guiro will be added for accompaniment.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

STUDENT ACTIVITY 5: From pictures given to the students, they will identify the accordion, tambora, guiro, and cowbell, instruments used in the music of this country; they will improvise the guiro and cowbell, and tambora.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 6: As students listen to a popular singer of the Dominican Republic, Juan Luis Guerra singing "Visa para un Sueno," or "Visa for a Dream," a meringue, selected students will improvise movements to the beat, and others will improvise on the appropriate instruments. They will answer questions as to the form and style of the music, what instruments they heard, and the definition and meaning of a visa.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 7: Students will listen to a traditional meringue, "Si Una Mujer Llore," from the Dominican Republic, and a selected group of students will improvise movements.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 8: Students will learn to play the three rhythms of the basic meringue, using tambora, or similar instrument, guiro, bass, and cowbell.

CUBA

STUDENT ACTIVITY 9: Students will identify and play the claves, maracas, and conga, instruments used in the music of this country.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 10: Students will clap the beat to the popular latin singer Gloria Estefan's "Get on Your Feet," and identify the different sections, as well as instruments used.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 11: One student will improvise on the conga drum as two students hold charts, each depicting an African deity.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 12: Students will play the habanera rhythm pattern on the conga drum, and add this pattern to the Spanish song, "La Paloma Se Fue," along with maracas and guiro.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 13: Students will clap the beat to "Afroblue," a salsa piece by Mongo Santamaria, a Cuban, and identify the sections and instruments. Selected students will improvise movements to the music.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 14: Students will clap the basic clave rhythm as they listen to a rumba from Cuba called "El Misterio," by Grupo AfroCuba de Matanzas.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 15: Students learn to perform the famous "Clave" rhythm with at least two other rhythmic parts for conga and maracas to demonstrate an example of the Cuban rumba, understand the variation that occurs with accents, and recognize the type of instruments identified with this music.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 16: Students learn the refrain and two verses of the popular 60's song "Guantanamera," lyrics by Jose Marti, and add an accompaniment on the conga, maracas, and guiro. They will understand the text, and what relation it had to the events of that time.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 17: Students learn to dance the Chachacha with the 50's piece, "Teach Me Tonight," from the tape "Ballroom Dancing Favorites" that demonstrates latin instruments and rhythms being incorporated in an earlier big band style.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 18: As students listen to a Cuban rumba, "La Negra Caridad," by Grupo Afrocupba de Matanzas, some will improvise movements to the beat, and others will improvise on the instruments. They will answer questions as to the form and style of the music, and what instruments they heard.

JAMAICA

STUDENT ACTIVITY 19: Students will read the lyrics of "One Love" together. They will clap the beat as they listen to the song.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 20: Students will perform some of the rhythms of the reggae style on cymbal, bass, and snare drum, substituting rhythm sticks and a regular hand drum for the bass and snare parts.

STUDENT ACTIVITY 21: Students will learn the song "Water Come a-me Eye," and add the clave, conga, and maracas as accompaniment.

Notes

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2. Chavez, Leo R. *Shadowed Lives* . New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1992.
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4. Seminar: Remaking america: Contemporary U.S. Immigration" Yale Teachers Institute, Dr. Patricia Pessar, 1996.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Interview with Bathania U. Hernandez of the Dominican Republic.
10. *World Music, The Rough Guide* . London, NY: Rough Guide, Penguin Books, 1995, p. 497.
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