

Residency Program Title:

"Bluegrass Stomp: Hear the Sound of North Carolina, Then and Now!"

Grade Level:

Grade 4

Curriculum connections:

This residency ties in with a number of NCSCOS Competency Goals for grade 4 in the areas of Music, Geography, and History. Fourth Grade Music standards, *Bluegrass Stomp* relates to Competency Goal 1, (singing: 1.03, 1.05, and 1.09, especially), Goal 6, (esp. 6.04, re: identifying instruments), Goal 8, and especially Goal 9, (Music in relation to history and culture, esp. 9.01, 9.03 and 9.04). This residency also allows time to explore Competency Goal 4 under Music Standards (re: composing and arranging music), wherein students will have the opportunity to compose a new folk song under Mr. Pettee's guidance. As for Geography and History Standards, Comp. Goal 2, (Role and importance of ethnic groups in NC history – esp. 2.02, 2.03, and 2.04), Goal 3, (Trace the history of colonization; esp. 3.01, 3.02, and 3.05), and Goal 5, (examine the impact of various cultural groups; esp. 5.02), are all fundamentally related to the program content.

Instructional Objectives:

- 1) The students will gain a new appreciation for the sounds of traditional southern folk music, including blues, bluegrass, Appalachian fiddle tunes, and spirituals.
- 2) The students will gain knowledge about the instruments on which this music is played.
- 3) The students will learn how different cultural groups from many different places in the world have contributed to the sounds of the southern folk music styles.
- 4) The students will learn about cultures that immigrated to NC from elsewhere in the country and the world.
- 5) The students will gain an appreciation for how new music forms can be created by combining elements from different cultures.
- 6) The students will produce lyrics to accompany a folk melody of their choosing, and compose and arrange their own folk song.
- 7) The students will learn respect for traditions and music styles different from their own.

Instructional Plan:

The content of this residency offers connections with studies in immigration, geography, history, cultural customs, and writing, as well as music. Some of these connections can be made in advance, with students researching their own family ancestries, and noting family customs, (which can be put into a graphic organizer, or made a part of writing exercises). A sense of their own family history not only can enhance the student's overall understanding of history, but also, this information, (whether gathered in advance, or simply brought out in class), can help Mr. Pettee tailor his presentation to the class. What information, and how to collect it, is one of the many important decisions made in the initial teacher-artist meetings before the residency.

The 5 day residency plan has four hours of classroom time over the first four days, and a school-wide assembly on Day 5. Each class day has a focus instrument for that day, and students use world maps to identify the place(s) of origin for each instrument. Lesson plans for the five days are as follows:

Day 1: Mr. Pettee will introduce the instruments over the course of his interactive program which covers many of the major developments in southern string music from the “pilgrims to the present”. Songs/tunes include “Old Joe Clark”, “Cluck Old Hen”, “Follow the Drinking Gourd”, “Ridin’ the New River Train,” and more. Day 1 is basically an “intimate” performance in class, which both instructs and sets up the guidelines for the rest of the residency. “Focus instrument” for Day 1 is the *guitar* – A Spanish invention widely used in so many different cultures and music styles. Pettee demonstrates some of the ways guitar is played, offering fiddle tunes played with a flat-pick, a sample of Flamenco-style, some blues, and bluegrass. The process of songwriting also commences on Day 1. Since Folk music deals with the land and place, and everyday concerns of the people, Mr. Pettee begins compiling a list of topics and everyday concerns of the students, from which the kids will construct rhyming lines/lyrics on Day 2.

Day 2: Day 2 begins with a rousing call-response, or sing-along, from Day 1 performance, (see Performance Lesson Plan above for possible choices). “Focus instrument” for Day 2 is the *banjo* – itself a synthesis of drum and string – an African invention that has become the heart and soul of traditional southern folk music. Banjo tunes include “Soldier’s Joy”, “This Little Light of Mine”, “old Joe Clark”, “Cripple Creek” and Fat’s Waller’s “Your Feets Too Big.” The incorporation of the banjo into Southern folk music is an example of how music can “weave together” the differences between us, literally creating harmony from dissonance. Next, Mr. Pettee will begin to help the kids “build” their own folk song. He will begin by offering some options for simple verse/chorus melodies. Melody selection, and lyric writing, then continues through the day, with each class creating a few rhyming lines, using subjects from their list from Day 1, which describe or relate to their own school or community. By the end of Day 2, Mr. Pettee has the ingredients for the song, which he assembles further on his own, as needed, before Day 3.

Day 3: A different group participation song, also performed on Day 1, but not reviewed on Day 2, gets the class going. “Focus Instrument” for Day 3 is the *mandolin*. A plectrum violin, the mandolin story goes back to Italy, and then deeper into Eastern Europe. Mandolin tunes include Schubert’s classical piece “Wellenspiel”, some Irish jigs, bluegrass songs, and the spiritual “Amazing Grace”. Pettee will review the story of the “Father of Bluegrass Music” Mr. Bill Monroe and his friendship w/ blues player Arnold Schultz, and will use this to show how music can connect members of a community by creating something new out of their differences. Pettee’s presentation of the story of John Newton, (author of “Amazing Grace,” and former slave trader who, 220+ years ago, quit the slave business and greatly inspired the abolition movement in England), features Pettee’s arrangement for the song performed instrumentally on the mandolin, and makes the point that music has the potential to unleash a wondrous healing power in our communities. Next, the kid’s own original folk song is further arranged, and rehearsed to conclude Day 3’s work.

Day 4: “Focus Instruments” for Day 4 are the *harmonica* and the *voice*. The harmonica was put in its current form in Germany, but the roots of the instrument take us to ancient China. Songs featuring both harmonica and voice this day include “The Old Grey Mare”, “Chicken Train”, “Oh Suzanna”, and, again, “Old Joe Clark.” The rest of this day is devoted to rehearsing the student’s song, now complete, and preparing the kids to present the song as a part of the Day 5 school assembly.

Day 5: Performance for the whole school. On Day 5, Pettee brings full sound system to share the message of 'Hear the Sound" for the entire student body, in one, or two, (if desired), assemblies. In addition to the usual offerings of the performance, the classes involved in the residency will present their song to the school. This is generally accomplished by the kids joining Mr. Pettee by standing and singing from their seats in the audience. On occasion, however, certain individuals are selected to add dance, voice, or instruments, based on interactions that occurred during the residency.

Instructional Time

The *Bluegrass Stomp* residency would require five total contact hours including the participation in the performance.