



# Smithsonian Folkways

## **Irish Bodhran and the Celtic Classics: Singing, Dancing, and Playing with Cunla and Patsy Ory Ory Aye**

### **A Smithsonian Folkways Lesson**

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#### **Summary:**

Play the bodhran accurately and with a steady beat. Learn listening, singing and dancing skill through the traditional song “Cunla”.

**Suggested Grade Levels:** 3-5, 6-8

**Country:** Ireland

**Region:** Northern Europe

**Culture Group:** Irish

**Genre:** Celtic

**Instruments:** Bodhran, Voice

**Language:** Irish, English

**Co-Curricular Areas:** Social Studies, Dance

**National Standards:** 1, 2, 6, 8, 9

**Prerequisites:** None

#### **Objectives:**

- Study about traditional Celtic instruments
- Learn to sing and play traditional Celtic tunes
- Perform through music and dance

#### **Materials:**

- Various Folkways recordings
- Bodhran
- Internet Access
- World Map

#### **Lesson Segments:**

1. **Cunla and the Bodhran Beat** (National Standards 1, 2, 6, 8)
2. **Workin’ and Drummin’ on the Railway** (National Standards 1, 2, 6, 9)

#### **1. Cunla and the Bodhran Beat**

- **Objectives:**

- Play the bodhran accurately and with a steady beat.
  - Identify the sound of the bodhran in the recording of "Cunla."
  - Sing the song, "Cunla"
  - Assist in designing and participate in the dance to "Cunla."
- **Materials:**
    - World Map
    - Bodhran
    - "Cunla" by Fox Watson and Laurie Diehl from *Fishers Hornpipe and other Celtic Tunes* (Cat. #FWO3520)  
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/fox-watson-and-laurie-diehl/fishers-hornpipe-and-other-celtic-traditional-tunes/celtic-world/music/album/smithsonian>
  - **Procedure:**
    - a. Students find Ireland on a World Map.
    - b. Teacher introduces the bodhran and playing technique.
    - c. Students pat a steady beat while the teacher improvises in 6/8 time.
    - d. Students are allowed to improvise on the bodhran while class keeps steady beat.
    - e. Students listen to "Cunla", identify the bodhran accompaniment and discuss text.
    - f. The class sings the song.
    - g. The Students and teacher improvise and design a dance to "Cunla".

**Assessment:** Teacher observes steady beat and bodhran improvising to determine where extra-assistance is needed and which students are ready for more challenging drumming.

## 2. Workin' and Drummin' on the Railway

- **Objectives:**
  - Understand why many Irish people immigrated to America
  - Students will sing, "Patsy Ory Ory Aye" authentically and with enthusiasm
  - Students will play recorders/drums with correct technique
  - Students will design their own classroom performance of "Patsy Ory Ory Aye"
- **Materials:**
  - Internet access to view more information on the potato famine
  - Copy of the Song, "Patsy Ory Ory Aye" aka "Paddy on the Railway" "Pat works on the Railway" "Poor Paddy Works on the Railway" " 'workin on the railway" and can be found freely available on the Internet

- "Pat Works on the Railway" by Cisco Houston from *Cisco Sings* (Cat. #FWO2346)  
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/cisco-houston/pat-works-on-the-railway/american-folk/music/track/smithsonian>
- Recorders and/or drums

- **Procedure:**

- a. Teacher explains the Irish potato famine that occurred in the mid-19th century that caused many people in Ireland to immigrate to America; many of these Irish worked to build our first railroads.
- b. Students sing, "Patsy Ory Ory Aye" with bodhran accompaniment by teacher.
- c. Class listens to "Pat Works on the Railway" and identifies how it can sound more authentic.
- d. Students play the melody and (possibly) harmonies on their recorders.
- e. Students review their drum playing and are assigned 6/8 rhythms to imitate bodhran playing.
- f. The class designs the order of their song, which includes singing the verses and chorus with recorder interludes and percussion background.

**Assessment:** The teacher observes that all students have an active role in their classroom performance of "Patsy Ory Ory Aye."