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:
o Play the bodhran accurately and with a steady beat.
o Identify the sound of the bodhran in the recording of "Cunla."
o Sing the song, "Cunla"
o Assist in designing and participate in the dance to "Cunla."

• **Materials:**
o World Map
o Bodhran

• **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:**
o Understand why many Irish people immigrated to America
o Students will sing, "Patsy Ory Ory Aye" authentically and with enthusiasm
o Students will play recorders/drums with correct technique
o Students will design their own classroom performance of "Patsy Ory Ory Aye"

• **Materials:**
o Internet access to view more information on the potato famine
o 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. #FW02346)
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."