



Smithsonian Folkways

Music From Saramaka: Maroon Life A Smithsonian Folkways Lesson

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Summary:

The lesson segments provide students with an opportunity to learn of the music of the people of the Maroon lands in Suriname. A song becomes a window for understanding the history and culture that was created by runaway slaves in this place within a South American rainforest. The students will then use the song as basis for their own lyrical and body percussion creations.

Suggested Grade Levels: (4-5, 6-8, 9-12)

Country: Suriname (South America)

Region: Saramaka

Culture Group: Maroon, Pikilio

Genre: Song of Loss

Instruments: Voice and body percussion

Language: Native

Co-Curricular Areas: Social Studies, History, Language Arts

National Standards:

- *Listening and Analyzing, #6
- * Singing, #1
- *Performing on Instruments (Body Percussion), #2
- * Composing and Arranging, #4
- * Improvising, #3

Prerequisites: None

Objectives:

- *Students will learn to listen attentively as they decipher the components of this Surinamese song.
- *Students will learn to sing this Surinamese song of the Maroons by listening and following a recorded model.
- *Students will use their own 'body percussion' to perform rhythms.
- *Students will learn to compose, improvise and arrange music in the style of Surinamese music they have studied.

Materials:

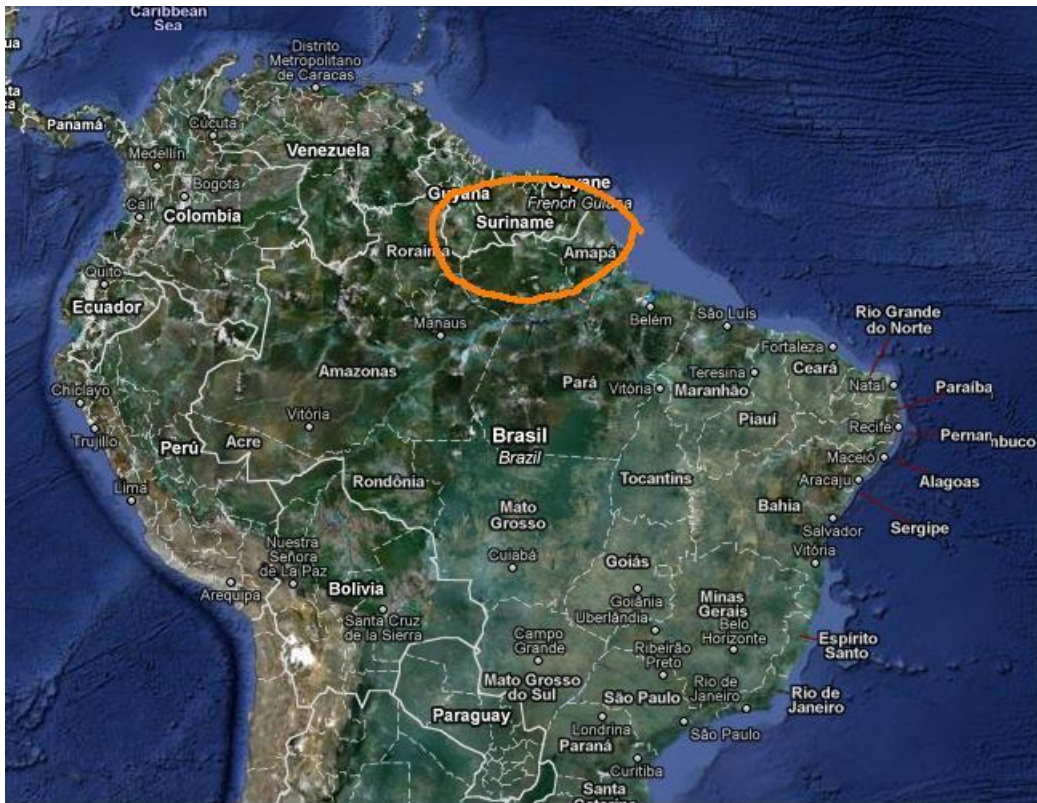
1. Smithsonian Folkways Album “*Music from Saramaka: A Dynamic Afro-American Tradition*” FW04225 (<http://www.folkways.si.edu/music-from-saramaka-a-dynamic-afro-american-tradition/african-american-music-world/album/smithsonian>)
Track #8, *Sakati Song of Disaster*
2. Album Liner Notes
(http://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/liner_notes/folkways/FW04225.pdf)

Lesson Segments:

1. **The Song and the People** (National Standards #1,2,3,4,6,9)
2. **Song Share** (National Standards #1, 2)
3. **Rhythmic Hand Clapping Games** (National Standards #1, 2)

Note: The length of each segment will vary, based on the number of students, their experience, age and grade levels, length of instruction, etc. This is simply an ‘Order of Service’, a map for teaching and learning, an instructional plan. Take as much time as necessary to master each lesson before proceeding to the next. Have Fun!!

1: The Song and the People



1. **Show the students a map of South America and point out Suriname.**

(The Republic of Suriname, is a country in northern South America. At just under 165,000 km² (64,000 sq mi) Suriname is the smallest sovereign state in South America. It has an estimated population of approximately 490,000, most of whom live on the country's north coast, where the capital Paramaribo is located).

2. **Give some background information about the Maroons of Suriname.**

*(The ancestors of the Saramaka were among those Africans sold into **slavery** in the late 17th and early 18th centuries to work Suriname's sugar, timber, and coffee plantations. Coming from a variety of African peoples speaking many different languages, they escaped into the dense **rainforest** – individually, in small groups, and sometimes in great collective rebellions – where for nearly 100 years they fought a war of liberation. In 1762, a full century before the general **emancipation** of slaves in Suriname, they won their freedom and signed a treaty with the Dutch crown. The word "Maroon" was used throughout the Americas to designate slaves who successfully escaped from slavery).*

3. Provide background information about the song.

(A woman made up this song in the mid-1960s, after a dam was built on the Suriname River and the northern villages of Saramaka began to be flooded. The people successfully sued the government of Surinam in 1997 – and won! The lyrics are:

Salamaka toonbe-oo, Salamaka toonbe, luku.
Salamaka toonbe-ee, Salamake toonbe-ee, gadu.
(Lendema-ee, Lendema-ee, Salamaka toonbe.)

Translation:

Saramaka's fallen, Saramaka's fallen, look.
Saramaka's fallen, Saramaka's fallen, gods.
Lendema (manager of the hydro-electric project), Saramaka's fallen.

4. Have students listen to the song.
5. Ask students to listen again, this time tapping a steady 8th note pattern along with song.
6. Again, have students listen, now tapping the rhythm of the melody.
7. Divide the Students into two groups. Group 1 taps the steady 8th note pattern while group 2 claps the rhythm of the melody
8. Switch parts.
9. Ask students to play both rhythms themselves, using their feet (L-R) to softly tap a steady 8th note pattern while clapping the rhythm of the melody.
10. Lead students in singing the melody – first without rhythm, then while tapping steady 8th notes. Note the Call and Response in the song. Create a new rhythm.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Salamaka toonbe". It consists of four staves of music. The first staff is the melody line in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "Sa-la-ma-ka toon-be - Sa-la-ma-ka toon-be Sa-la-ma-ka toon-be Sa-ra-ma-ka toon-be ga -". The second staff is a steady 8th note bass line in G major, with lyrics: "5 du Len - de - ma - ee - ee Len - de - ma - ee - ee Sa - ra - ma - ka toon - be!". The third staff is the melody line, starting with a repeat sign, with lyrics: "8 Sa - la - ma - ka toon - be - Sa - la - ma - ka toon - be Sa - la - ma - ka toon - be Sa - ra - ma - ka toon - be ga -". The fourth staff is the steady 8th note bass line, with lyrics: "12 du Len - de - ma - ee - ee Len - de - ma - ee - ee Sa - ra - ma - ka toon - be!".

Assessment: Students should play the rhythm without help, then sing the song, then both song and rhythm simultaneously.

Extension: Students will choose a topic to write their own song about, and share in circle next session. Encourage students to recall the style of the melody, rhythm and form of the Surinamese song they learned, and to write words that are personally meaningful to them.

2: Song Share

1. Review and practice singing the song and clapping patterns from the first segment.
2. Have students form a circle, and play both rhythms as they sing the songs they created as an Extension to learning the Surinamese song in the first segment. Have individual students take turns in the middle singing their own songs as group sings response.

Assessment: Students should successfully demonstrate their capacity to create songs with solo-group sections.

Extension: Introduce rhythmic hand-clapping games as a sociocultural phenomenon of children in many lands. (A search on YouTube for “hand clapping games” will net many wonderful examples) . Select several games that work with the students’ (as per their age and experience) and with the song rhythm for use next session.

3: Rhythmic Hand Clapping Games

1. Show the video segments (fruits of the search for the hand-clapping gems from the previous segment) first for the students to see, then to try it out and to decide whether or not the rhythmic movement will fit the song they learned in Session 1.
2. Have students choose one (or more) to use to accompany the song. (If none works, modify one).
3. Students practice with partners to perfect the pattern, then add it to the singing of the song.
4. Students may wish to combine a hand-clapping pattern with their own original songs, then share it in circle.

Assessment: Students should integrate their singing with their hand-clapping patterns, the two of which support one another in this musical invention.

Extension: It might be very interesting to compare and contrast this music with that of the Creole music of Surinam.

Creole Music of Surinam Various Artists FW04233

Recording found here:

<http://www.folkways.si.edu/creole-music-of-surinam/african-american-music-world/album/smithsonian>

Informative liner notes found here:

http://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/liner_notes/folkways/FW04233.pdf