Traditional Music in the Age of Global Technology

A Collaborative Virtual Educational Project between Schools in Brazil, Mexico, and the USA

Project Description:

Traditional Music in the Age of Global Technology is a virtual project proposing the discussion of traditional music in Rio de Janeiro and São José do Rio Preto (Brazil), Monterrey (Mexico), and Tampa (USA). The project purpose is to identify and to investigate traditional music in these regions from its historical, social, and cultural point of view, as well as its significance as an expression of folk art. The virtual project facilitates students and teachers to exchange information using the web as a tool to connect students and teachers from distant geographical areas. The selected topic is "traditional music," a musical style or function that has social and cultural significance to your area "music of your own backyards." In searching for a local musical tradition, teachers and students should identify a musical style that distinguishes your region from others.

The first function of music, especially in traditional music, is to produce a feeling of community connectivity by voicing social and cultural characteristics of its people. Thus, the project should investigate the involvement people have with its own music and culture. The selection of a topic should be given priority to its association to each local community. Examples are: music performed during folk festivals; music performed live; music that is transmitted from one generation to the next. Good sources of information are community leaders, group leaders, local schools, and musical families.

Connectivity

It allows the participants to exchange and to post information via "blackboard" software communication. The support is provided by PGL and the technical support from the University of Tampa. All data and digital information is sent by e-mail (word file, mp3, digital audio, adobe, etc...) and then posted on the "blackboard." The project conclusion will include a live videoconference, a possible performance by the subject of your study, and a final presentation overview of the project.

Participants (The Class)

With a maximum of 30 people (estimated), everyone associated with the project (the class) should establish teams of 5-7 participants, including one or more mentoring teacher. My suggestion is to have each task split by the number of participants. For the schools where English is not the first language, an English teacher or student with the knowledge of the language

should be requested to facilitate the exchange of information during the project and video conferences.

PROJECT TASKS
These are the tasks to be accomplished by each participating school. They are guides and recommendations of how to go about finding information on your topic of choice. The tasks are guides to explain music and culture through the mind of its people. The objective is to gather as much information as possible with focus on content. Each participating school should develop their own personal style of narration and follow a script base on the following tasks:

1 – Geographically show and describe your school, city, and region. This "show and tell" should reveal aspects of the region such as geography, types of population, ethnic background, and colonization. Ideally, this information should steer the reader to identify and to differentiate your region from the others.

2- Define your topic "traditional music" within the scope of your region. You could interview leaders and composers of your chosen topic and use their definition do describe your topic. You also can describe the music as what it represents to the people. Use an audio example, perhaps your informant(s) could play or sing a traditional song.

3- Elaborate on how and why your "traditional music" is important for the music makers (musicians, singers, composers) and people (audience) of your region, state, and country. What does it stands for in your community? Who is affected by this music, how?

4- Which are the musical instruments or voices used in the music making process? Do the participants in your "traditional music" make their musical instruments? If so, how? Do the musicians and composers of your "traditional music" have a preference for a musical instrument, which one? Why? Is gender important to the music? How?

5- How the participants or members of the tradition learn how to play their music? How are the songs composed? Why? Are the songs pre-composed (composed before performance) or compose (improvised) at the moment of the performance? What are the songs about? Explain.

6- What is the text (lyric) about? What does it represent? Translate a song or two texts and use it to explain its meaning.

7- Who are the musicians, singers, and composers of your traditional music?

8- Is religion part of your traditional music? Does religion affect the way the music is performed?

9- Is the music performed indoors or outdoors? Who are the listeners (audience)?

10- Does music mediates personal relations among the music makers and performers? How?

11. Closing Statement: Synthesize your researched topic and why it is a true representation of your traditional music.

MUSICAL PROJECT (Optional)
This is the music itself. This task is envisioned for a group that has a music teacher or music expert in the group. The purpose of a musical project is to enhance and to back up the research project with concrete evidence (transcription, translation, music recording, etc.) Examples are:

1- Transcribe (notate) to sheet music an example of melody used for your informant;
2- explain the type of accompaniment used for your "traditional music" (musical instruments, singing) ;
3- Define (write) the vocal and instrumental lines (in a specific melody who sings or play the melody); who plays the accompaniment?
4- Present a harmonic progression, rhythmic idea, or melodic structure to the musical accompaniment, explain?
5- Define the structure or form of a traditional song: melody, harmony, and rhythmic accompaniment.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION
This is complementary information that could be used to your webpage, giving the students another dimension to the music.

Music Recordings Available to be downloaded (mp3 files)

Links to "Roots Music" most visited web sites.

Discussion List (What are people saying about this music)

Roots Music Events (Concerts and performances in general) associated the style.