

MÉTIS CULTURE • SYMBOLS, VALUE SYSTEM, ART AND MUSIC • MUSIC DANCE

Learning goal: Students will understand the importance of Métis music and dance.

Suggested timeline: 1 x 75-minute periods

Subjects: Music, Drama, Physical Education

Lesson opener

See it:

“...culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs...”

— *United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2003)*

“My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it is the artists who will give them their spirit back.”

— Louis Riel, July 4, 1885

Strategy/Lesson activity

Feel it:

Students listen to Métis music and watch a video

youtube.com/watch?v=1XsrUYNPDks

vimeo.com/52163581

When you listen to Métis music, how does it make you feel?

What impact do you think Métis music had/has on Métis identity, Métis families, and Métis communities?

Know it:

Experiential learning—students will listen for patterns and differences between a violinist and a Métis fiddler youtube.com/watch?v=BZtIL5k2gPM

1. Music

Why was music important during the fur trade? Why were fur trade companies willing to pay a higher income to men who were musical? How did the tempo of a song impact productivity of canoe brigades? How did the importance of music in the fur trade carry over to life in Métis communities? Why was the fiddle the instrument of choice during the fur trade? How is Métis music similar to, yet different from, First Nation and European music? In what ways does Métis music reflect Métis people, culture, values and world views?

2. Dance

How did Métis dance evolve? How is it similar to, yet different from, First Nation and European dances? Were Métis men and women physically fit during the fur trade? Why or why not? How did the physical fitness of Métis people impact Métis dance? In what ways does Métis dance reflect Métis people, culture, values and world views?

Assessment

Do It:

1. Music

- Perform a Métis paddling song. “M’en Revenant de la Jolie Rochelle/C’est L’aviron” youtube.com/watch?v=DqTZ43-SkRE (This is just one of many examples)
- Create percussion to accompany a Métis fiddle song and/or paddling song by using props that would be available within a canoe, could be easily made from natural materials, or by using parts of your body (e.g., spoons, hand clapping, foot stomping, toe tapping, jiggling, etc.).
- Identify the use of syncopation within Métis fiddle music.
- Create a Métis song to tell a story, entertain, celebrate, create a mood, or set the beat for paddling.
- Create a work that integrates music and drama to represent a Métis world view.
- Investigate the purpose, cultural context, technical complexities, and elements of a selection of historical and contemporary Métis music. Examples of contemporary Métis songs include, but are not limited to, the following:

Amanda Rheame—We Aspire metisnation.org/news-media/news/mno-we-aspire-commercials-on-aptn (background music)

Don Freed—Daughters of the Country

Andrea Menard—Métis Hands

Rodney Brown—Pemmican Wars

Marg Raynor—Southern Harbour

Andrea Menard, Donny Parenteau—Métis Pride

2. Dance

- Learn a First Nation dance and a French or Scottish jig. Combine the elements of dance in a variety of ways to create dances that respectfully blend First Nation and European dances, as was done during the Fur Trade to create Métis dance.
- Learn Métis dances from a video—Steps in Time youtube.com/watch?v=ZS5dbyKkEjg
- Experience a “rendezvous” with Métis merry making of fiddle music, songs of the canoe and kitchen table, Métis dancing, and Métis traditional games.

Suggested Resources:

The Métis Fiddle With Trent Freeman and Ry Moran youtube.com/watch?v=BZtIL5k2gPM

Métis Nation of Ontario Website—Culture and Heritage
metisnation.org/culture-heritage/who-are-the-m%C3%A9tis

Métis Rhythms youtube.com/watch?v=qhgEch-TMVA

Steps in Time youtube.com/watch?v=ZS5dbyKkEjg

M’en Revenant de la Jolie Rochelle/C’est L’aviron youtube.com/watch?v=DqTZ43-SkRE

Métis Fiddler Quartet- Fiddle Diaries: Our Family Tree vimeo.com/52163581

Sierra Noble, Vimy Re-Dedication. France. April 9, 2007 youtube.com/watch?v=AYLv5wasaHc

How the Fiddle Flows vimeo.com/67935996

Traditional Métis Socialization and Entertainment
by Todd Paquin, Darren R. Préfontaine and Patrick Young
metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00724.M%C3%A9tis%20Entertainment.pdf

Medicine Fiddle folkstreams.net/film,178

Métis—The Canadian Encyclopedia: thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/Métis

Our Legacy; Métis Culture: scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_Métisculture

Aboriginal Beliefs, Values and Inspirations (student textbook)—ISBN:978-0-13-510651-8 Co-published by Pearson Education Canada and GoodMinds.com.