

Meet Antonín Dvořák!



“My own duty as a teacher...is not so much to interpret Beethoven, Wagner or other masters of the past, but to give what encouragement I can to the young musicians of America.”

1841-1904


- He was born in Nelahozeves, Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic).
- His father was a butcher and his mother was an innkeeper.
- He began his formal musical studies at the Prague Organ School.
- As a young man, he made a living teaching music, by playing the organ in church, and by playing the viola at the Czech National Theatre.
- Johannes Brahms and Bedrich Smetana were friends of Dvořák.
- In 1892 Dvořák traveled to America and became the first director of the National Conservatory of Music, a post he held for two years.
- He also spent some time in Spillville, Iowa, which had a community of Bohemian people.
- Dvořák was a devoted husband and father.
- He loved trains and included train-like sounds in his music.
- Dvořák used Czech folk songs in his compositions, which reflected a love for his homeland.



Famous people born in the Czech Republic: Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State; Milos Forman, film director; Bedrich Smetana and Leos Janacek, composers; and tennis player Martina Navratilova.

Did you know...

In Czech culture, when giving flowers as a gift, give only odd numbers. Even numbers are given at funerals.

 Link up to learn more about Antonín Dvořák!

<http://dvorak.musicabona.com>

www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/czech_republic/

Lesson Focus: A Study in Form

Lesson Plan for Slavonic Dance, Op. 46 No. 8 by Antonin Dvorák

Standards Addressed:

- Standard 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
- Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

Performance Indicators: Students will:

- play in combination with other instrument parts with a good tone, pitch, duration and loudness. (1b)
- describe the music in terms related to basic elements such as melody, rhythm, and harmony. (3b)

Objective:

- To help students listen for basic elements of music and understand how those elements determine the form of a piece.
- To help students “feel” the form of a piece by moving to the music.

Materials:

- CD player
- Recording of Slavonic Dance, Op. 46 No. 8 by Antonin Dvořák
- Pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments
- (*Optional*) Scarves for movement exercise

Listening Repertoire:


Slavonic Dance, Op. 46 No. 8 by Antonin Dvořák

Procedures:

Teacher explains form. Form is the way music is organized. The way basic elements of music (melody and rhythm) are organized determines the form of the piece.

Teacher teaches basic rhythms of piece.

Rhythm 1: $\frac{3}{4}$ 

Rhythm 2: $\frac{3}{4}$ 

The first two measures can be taught initially without the tie and then having the class whisper “hold” on the first quarter note of the second measure while holding through the tied note. The second two measures can be taught by having the class “copy cat” clap to get the feeling of the rhythm, then helping the teacher write the rhythm on the board.

After students are comfortable clapping the Rhythms 1 and 2, have them play on non-pitched percussion instruments. (Or they may play the rhythms on a pitched instrument using only one note.) Ask students to contrast what it feels like to play Rhythm 1 and Rhythm 2 on percussion instruments. (They may say something like Rhythm 2 needs to be played on an instrument that can sustain a tone, because the note value is so long.)

Teacher assists students in comparing and contrasting the rhythms. (Rhythm 1 uses many different note values and a tie which creates a syncopation, Rhythm 2 uses only one kind of note value.)

Teacher teaches two melodies of piece:

Melody 1: (you'll need to transpose it down two octaves)

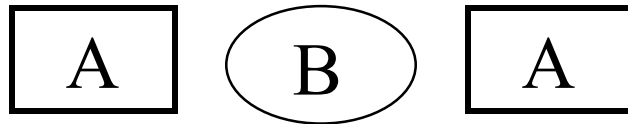
Melody 2:

Teacher asks students to sing both melodies either on "la" or using solfege. Then Teacher can divide class into two groups and have students do one or more of these activities:

1. One group can sing Melody 1 on "la" while the second group plays steady dotted half-notes (Rhythm 2) on non-pitched percussion instruments.
2. One group can play Melody 1 on pitched instruments while the second group plays steady dotted half-notes (Rhythm 2) on non-pitched percussion instruments.
3. One group will play Melody 1 on pitched instruments followed by second group playing Melody 2 on pitched instruments. The first group will repeat Melody 1. Teacher explains that this is a three-part or ABA form. Teacher can introduce the term "ternary" to the class.

Teacher plays piece for students asking them to listen for the two melodies. The A section contains Melody 1 and three similar melodies. Ask students if they hear the slight variations on Melody 1. When students hear Melody 2, they can raise their hands to acknowledge that they hear the change.

Teacher explains that we show form with capital letters. Melody 1 is the main melody in the first section of the piece. This first section is called A. (*Teacher writes A on the board.*) Melody 2 is the melody in the second section of the piece. The second section is called B. (*Teacher writes B on the board.*) Teacher asks class, “what do you hear after the B section?” Class responds with Melody 1. Teacher explains that when we hear that melody again, it tells us that we will hear the A section again. (*Teacher writes A on the board.*)



Teacher plays piece one more time and asks students to listen for repetition of the melody. “Why do you think Dvorak would want to use so much repetition in this piece?”

Lesson Extension: Movement Exercise

Ask students to form a circle and join hands. Teacher places scarves in the center of the circle.

Melody 1: As the music plays they will walk counterclockwise for seven measures (since the music has a fast tempo, they should have one step per measure). On the eighth measure, students stop and clap.

Then students join hands again and walk clockwise for seven measures, on the eighth measure, students stop and clap.

When students hear the variations on Melody 1, they can do something slightly different such as walk for four beats toward the center of the circle, raising arms high, then take four steps backwards while lowering arms.

When students hear **Melody 2** they can grab a scarf and move freely to the music.

When the A section repeats, students quickly form a circle again, drop scarves in the center of the circle and join hands. Repeat steps as outlined above.

