Adventures in Music

Dvořák’s New World Symphony
Dear Teachers,

We are very excited to have the opportunity to bring the music of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra into your school! We are proud to introduce Dvořák’s New World Symphony as one of our programs for the 2012–2013 school year.

In 1892 Antonin Dvořák arrived in New York City to head the National Conservatory of Music. While there he composed his Symphony No. 9, “From the New World.” This program discusses Dvořák’s inspirations for the work, from the Native American and African American melodies and traditions he discovered in America to the Czech folk songs of his youth. Dvořák’s blending of old and new world traditions resulted in one of the great pieces of American music, a Symphony that embodies the spirit of our country. We hope that you and your students enjoy learning about this inspiring work!

The materials in the study guide bring together many disciplines such as reading, history, geography, and cultural studies. The materials meet many TEKS objectives, which are listed on the next page.

We have created a playlist for this program on classical.com. The playlist contains a one-minute clip of each piece on the program. The following link will take you directly to the playlist.

http://www.classical.com/playlists/132183

Please feel free to contact me with any questions – we look forward to seeing you!

Sincerely,

Holly Klindt
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These materials are for educational use only in connection with the Adventures in Music Program of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra.
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TEKS Objectives for Dvořák’s *New World Symphony*

Language Arts and Reading – Chapter 110:
1.4, 12.4, 13.3, 14.2, 15.1, 16.1 – Reading. Student reads for different purposes from various sources.
11.5, 12.6, 13.5, 14.4, 15.2, 16.2 – Vocabulary. Student develops and uses new reading/writing vocabulary.
11,10, 12.14, 13.14, 14.13, 15.11, 16.11 – Expository Text. Student analyzes, makes inferences and draws conclusions about expository text and provides evidence from the text to support understanding.
11.21, 12.27, 13.28, 14.29, 15.27, 16.27 – Listening. Student listens attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students will listen to a speaker and follow oral directions.

Social Studies – Chapter 113:
2.2, 3.1, 4.4, 5.1 – History. Student is introduced to historical figures who helped shape the world. Student understands how individuals, events and ideas have influenced the history of various communities.
2.3, 3.2, 4.2, 5.3 – History. Student understands the concepts of time and chronology.
2.4, 3.4, 4.6, 5.5, 6.5, 7.6 – Geography. Student understands the concept of location. Student uses Geographic tools to collect, analyze and interpret data.
4.15, 5.14 – Culture. Student understands importance of artists and works of art to the cultural heritage of communities.
7.22 – Culture. Student understands relationship between arts and the times during which they were created.

Music - Chapter 117:
3.1, 6.1, 9.1, 12.1, 15.1, 18.1 – Perception. Student describes and analyzes musical sound. Student identifies instruments and instrument groups visually and aurally. Student uses musical terminology.
3.3, 6.5, 9.5, 12.5, 15.5, 18.5 – Historical/Cultural Heritage. Student relates music to history, society and culture.
3.4, 6.6, 9.6, 12.6, 15.6, 18.6 – Response/Evaluation. Student responds to and evaluates music and musical performance.
Antonin Leopold Dvořák was born in the Bohemian village of Nelahozeves, near Prague. He studied music from the age of six — his father was a professional musician and encouraged his young son. Dvořák studied organ at the Prague Organ School, as well as viola and violin. By age 20 he was a very accomplished musician — he played in many local bands and taught piano lessons.

At age 32 Dvořák moved to Prague to take a job as Organist in St. Adalbert’s church. This was a prestigious position that also gave him plenty of time to compose his own music. It was around this time that he also befriended the famous composer Johannes Brahms.

Dvořák enjoyed much success and popularity during this time. He traveled extensively and his works were well received everywhere he went. In 1892 his growing fame caught the attention of Jeanette Thurber, the founder of the National Conservatory of Music in America. Dvořák was offered $15,000 per year to be director of the conservatory. At the conservatory his main goal was to discover/define “American” music. Dvořák felt that the music of the Native Americans and the African Americans was the base on which a truly American musical style would be built. He wrote Symphony No. 9 “From the New World” with these ideas in mind, incorporating musical ideas from both cultures.

Though Dvořák enjoyed his time in America, he was always homesick. He spent his summer vacations in the Czech village of Spillville, Iowa. He was happy to return to Prague when funding for the conservatory position dried up in 1895. Dvořák continued to compose, focusing on opera and chamber music. In 1901 he became the director of the Prague Conservatory, a position that he held until his death in 1904.
The Music

Symphony No. 9 “From the New World”

In 1892 Antonin Dvořák and his family arrived in “The New World”, the United States of America. Dvořák had come to the country to take a job as director of the National Conservatory of Music.

When the Dvořák’s arrive, the country was celebrating the 400th anniversary of Columbus’s landing, and celebrations were going on everywhere! Dvořák was overwhelmed by the sights and sounds of this new world, writing to a friend:

_Thousands upon thousands of people, and an everchanging sight! And you should hear all the kinds of music! … Well, America seems to have demonstrated all it is and all it is capable of! I haven’t got enough words to describe it all._

Dvořák may not have had enough words, but he had music. When the New York Philharmonic commissioned (hired) him to write a Symphony, he used several types of American music for inspiration, including the music of the Native American and African American cultures. His blending of American music with the music of his homeland (Czechoslovakia) resulted in a uniquely American symphony, the first of it’s kind.
**Spirituals**

Spirituals are religious folk songs created and first sung by African Americans in slavery. Spirituals were sung by the slaves to pass the time during their working day, to strengthen the bonds of their community, and to relay important information that needed to be kept secret from their masters. Many spirituals have a call and response structure — they are meant to be sung back and forth between a leader and the rest of the group.

**Coded Songs and the Underground Railroad**

Many spirituals were also signal songs. On the surface, signal songs seemed to be music of praise, which was allowed and encouraged. On another level, the songs held hidden messages communicated by code words that meant one thing to whites and another thing to the enslaved. Messages of support, unity and revolt, even directions for how to escape on the Underground Railroad, were contained in the songs.

Most signal songs had references to Biblical people (Moses, Jesus), places (Egypt, Promised Land) and stories (Jews led out of Egypt). The main theme in signal songs and other spirituals was escaping from slavery by striving toward freedom.

Try to match these “code words” with their hidden meanings:

__1. Moses__   A. Atlantic Ocean  
__2. Egypt__    B. Means of escape  
__3. Pharoah__  C. Conductor who led slaves to freedom  
__4. River Jordan__  D. Personal decision to escape  
__5. Red Sea__  E. The North and freedom  
__6. Chariot or train__  F. Ohio River — this river separated the north from the south  
__7. Shoes__  G. Plantation owner or slave owner  
__8. Promised Land__  H. Land of suffering
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Dvořák was fascinated when he first heard spirituals. He was convinced that these melodies were the ultimate American music and wanted to build a school of classical music based on the melodies. Dvořák uses several spiritual melodies in his Symphony No. 9 “From the New World”, including Swing low, Sweet Chariot.

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot was a signal song. The chart below explains the coded meaning behind the words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lyrics</th>
<th>Literal Meaning</th>
<th>Coded Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Swing low,</td>
<td>Come down from above,</td>
<td>Come into the slaveholding states,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sweet chariot,</td>
<td>heavenly vehicle,</td>
<td>the “Underground Railroad,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comin’ for to carry me home...</td>
<td>Coming to take me to heaven...</td>
<td>Come to take me to freedom in the North or in Canada...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse One:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I looked over Jordan, and what</td>
<td>I looked over the</td>
<td>I looked over the Mississippi River (or the Ohio River), and what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>did I see?</td>
<td>River Jordan (in Biblical</td>
<td>did I see? (“Jordan” is the code word for the Mississippi or Ohio rivers.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israel), and what did I see?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A band of angels</td>
<td>A group of angels</td>
<td>The workers of the Underground Railroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’comin after me...</td>
<td>coming to take me to heaven...</td>
<td>helping me to reach the North...</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Dvořák wrote 10 operas over the course of his career. He was very interested in writing an 11th opera, based on “The Song of Hiawatha”, but never had a chance to finish the work. However, Dvořák used ideas that he had been developing for the opera in his “New World Symphony.” The composer wrote that the 3rd movement of the symphony was “suggested by the scene at the feast in Hiawatha where the Indians dance.” The following paragraph describes the dance:

To the sound of flutes and singing,  
To the sound of drums and voices,  
Rose the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
And began his mystic dances.  
First he danced a solemn measure, 
Very slow in step and gesture,  
In and out among the pine-trees,  
Through the shadows and the sunshine,  
Treading softly like a panther.  
Then more swiftly and still swifter,  
Whirling, spinning round in circles,  
Leaping o’er the guests assembled,  
Eddyng round and round the wigwam,  
Till the leaves went whirling with him,  
Till the dust and wind together 
Swept in eddies round about him.

In the poem the dance begins quietly and builds to a whirlwind. Dvořák uses musical elements to describe the changes in the dance.

**Dynamic — Musical volume; how loud or soft the music is.**
**Timbre/Tone Color — The relative darkness or brightness of sound.**
**Style — is the music smooth, detached, flowing, abrupt?**

Listen to the beginning of the 3rd movement several times as you answer the following questions.

- How does the Dynamic change as the dance progresses?
- How does the Tone Color change?
- Does the Style of music change as the dance progresses? If so, how?
The string family is the largest section of the orchestra. The four main stringed instruments look similar but are all different sizes. Each can be played by plucking the strings with the fingers or with a bow, which is pulled back and forth across the instrument’s four strings.

The **VIOLIN** is the smallest of the string instruments and can play the highest notes. The violin often plays the melody — this is the tune you will be humming after you leave a performance.

The **VIOLA** is slightly larger than the violin. Because it is bigger, it can play lower notes. Since the viola is only a little bit bigger than the violin it can be hard to tell them apart. The viola plays many beautiful melodies just like the violin.

The **CELLO** is much large than the violin and the viola. It is so large that the cellist must sit on a chair holding the cello between his or her knees in order to play. The cello often plays accompaniment parts.

Because it is the largest of the stringed instruments, the **DOUBLE BASS** plays the lowest notes. This instrument is so large that the bass players have to stand up or sit on tall stools to play it. The bass often plays accompaniment parts with the cello.
WOODWINDS

Woodwind instruments produce sound when players blow air into them. All of these instruments were originally made out of wood, which is why they are called woodwinds!

The **FLUTE** is made of metals such as silver, gold or platinum. The player produces musical notes by blowing air into a hole in the side of the instrument. Flutists change notes by pressing down round, metal buttons called keys. The flute has a very high, light and beautiful sound much like that of a bird.

The **OBOE** makes its sound when the player blows air through a mouthpiece containing cut pieces of bamboo called a “reed.” In the case of the oboe, the player ties two reeds together to make a “double reed.” The oboe has a very clear, penetrating sound. It is a very important instrument, as the oboist is the player who tunes the whole orchestra before every concert.

The **CLARINET** looks much like the oboe, but is a little bit larger. The clarinetist makes a sound by blowing through a single reed attached to a mouthpiece. The clarinet can play very high and very low, very soft or very loud. They are used for many types of music, including classical, jazz and folk.

The **BASSOON** is the largest of the main woodwind instruments. It looks like three wooden poles attached together. In fact, the Italian word for bassoon means “bundle of sticks.” The bassoon has the lowest sound of the woodwind instruments.
The brass instruments are long brass tubes curled and bent into different shapes. They flare out at one end into what is called a bell. At the other end of the instrument is the mouthpiece. The sound of the brass instruments is produced by the vibration of the player’s lips as they blow through the mouthpiece. To change notes, brass instruments either have buttons, called “valves,” or a slide.

The **French Horn** is a very long tube that is twisted and curled into an instrument about one foot wide. If you untwisted the tube, it would be 12 feet long! French horns can have a very mellow sound, but they are also often used for hunting calls.

The **Trumpet** is the smallest brass instrument. It can play the highest notes of all the brass instruments and often plays in marches or fanfares.

The **Trombone** is the only brass instrument that does not use valves. Instead, the player moves a curved tube, called a “slide,” back and forth in order to change notes.

The **Tuba** is the largest and lowest sounding instrument in the brass section. If you uncoiled the tuba it would be 35 feet long!
Percussion instruments make sound when players strike, shake or scrape them. This section contains many different instruments.

One of the most commonly used percussion instruments is the **TIMPANI**. Timpani are drums that look like huge copper bowls with a special covering stretched over the top. The timpani are played by striking the covering with padded sticks, called “mallets.” Timpani are one of the only percussion instruments that produce a definite pitch. They come in many different sizes.

Other common percussion instruments are the **SNARE DRUM**, **BASS DRUM**, **TRIANGLE** and **CYMBALS**. The snare drum, bass drum and triangle all make sounds when they are struck by a mallet or stick. Cymbals make sounds when they are clashed together.
The Conductor

Who is that person in front of the Orchestra waving their arms around? That person is called the conductor, and he or she has a very important job. The conductor is the person who shows the orchestra when to start playing. The conductor also tells the orchestra many other things about how to play a piece of music — all without saying a word!

Pick a song the whole class knows and sing it together. Easy, right? Now, as a class, try to sing the song again with nobody telling you when to start. This makes things more difficult! Imagine what an orchestra would sound like if every person just started whenever they wanted. This is one reason the conductor is so important — they make sure that everyone starts, stops and stays together.

The Basics

The conductor stands in front of the orchestra, on a podium, and conducts by using hand and body motions. Sometimes he/she uses a baton as well.

The conductor controls how fast/slow and how soft/loud the orchestra plays.

The conductor uses his/her right hand to control tempo (speed).

The conductor uses his/her left hand to control dynamics (volume).

The conductor’s facial expressions — happy, angry, sad, etc.— can tell the orchestra how to play.
With his/her right hand or baton the conductor controls tempo (speed). Conductors use patterns to show the orchestra where they are in the music. Some commonly used patterns are seen below—let’s practice them!

**Two Beat Pattern**

**Three Beat Pattern**

**Four Beat Pattern**

Conductors use their left hand to show the orchestra how loud or soft to play.

To make the orchestra play softer, drop your left hand to the floor, palm down.

To make the orchestra play louder, raise your left hand towards the ceiling with your palm up.

Practice raising and lowering your left hand to change the dynamics.

Next, practice conducting with both hands. Choose volunteers to conduct the class singing a song that everyone knows.

It’s not as easy as it looks! The best conductors have practiced for many years.
Audience Etiquette

There are many places to go where you will be a member of an audience. However, audiences do not act the same at every type of event. Brainstorm different places where they might be part of an audience.

Audiences are expected to act differently at different types of events. Something that is ok at a football game may not be appropriate for a symphony concert.

The chart above shows places that you might go and types of behavior. In each box, write the appropriate response (always, sometimes, never), explaining how often you would exhibit this behavior at each place.

Why is audience etiquette important to the performers?

Why is audience etiquette important to those around you?
Student Reviews

Teaching Objective — Students will practice critical thinking and descriptive writing.

For this activity you will need:

Paper and Writing Utensils
A review of a concert from the Fort Worth Star Telegram or other source
A recording of a piece of classical music

Have your students imagine that they are putting on a performance. How will they know what the audience thinks about their performance? Brainstorm different ways that they might find out what the audience thinks.

Discuss with the class the role of a professional critic, a person whose job is to publish reviews of the performances that they go to see. Pass out copies of one or more reviews to read as a class.

Have students listen attentively to a recording of a piece of classical music. Then, using the published review as a model, have the students write a review of the recording.

After the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra concert, repeat the activity, having the students write a review of the performance. Remind them to use as much detail as they can — the goal is to give the reader a full picture of the performance.

Have the students share their reviews with each other. This is a good time to discuss why people have different opinions about the same performance.

We would love to read some of your reviews! Please send them to our education department and we will post selected reviews on our website and/or Facebook page!