Experiencing the Music of Thailand through Orff-Schulwerk:  
A Series of Lesson Plans

Honors Creative Project (HONRS499)

by

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Abstract

The traditional music of Thailand can sound strange and hypnotic upon first hearing. Its linear composition, shrill timbres, and haunting intonation make it vastly different from traditional Western music. The folk and classical music of Thailand can be valuable tools for expanding the musical and cultural understanding for students in the general music classroom. This project is a set of lesson plans for teaching the music of Thailand in the elementary/middle school general music classroom using the Orff-Schulwerk approach. The composer Carl Orff and his associate, Gunild Keetman, created the Orff-Schulwerk approach in Germany during the mid-20th century. It has since enjoyed popularity among music educators from across the world. The Schulwerk teaches music in the way that students best learn, through games, movement, singing, and playing instruments. Therefore, using the Orff-Schulwerk approach allows students to actively explore the music and culture of Thailand through meaningful experiences like melodic improvising, playing drums, singing, playing xylophones, playing games, reading poetry, and composing their own rhythmic/melodic ideas.

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Finally, my greatest thanks goes to my students from the PSU-BSU English Camp from southern Thailand and my middle school students from the Orff-Schulwerk classroom at Fall Creek Valley Middle School. They are the ones that continue to most inspire me.
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Background Information

This creative project has come from my own personal interests and unique experiences. Philosophically, I believe that students in a music classroom can only learn through active participation in meaningful musical experiences. This idea is a cornerstone of Orff-Schulwerk approach and the reason why I intend to use Orff and Keetman’s ideas throughout my teaching career. So, one may ask why I have chosen the music of Thailand for this project. I have had the unique opportunity of traveling to Thailand in May of 2006 and May of 2007. I was a conversational English instructor at a camp for college and high school students in southern Thailand. I had the unique opportunity to learn songs and games first hand from young people in Thailand. This creative project is also a summation of my undergraduate training in music education at Ball State University.

Final Points on the Lesson Plans

1. These lessons are simply meant to be springboards. Orff-Schulwerk emphasizes the creativity of the individual teacher and each individual student. Therefore, I’ve included my own arrangements and ideas, but each lesson provides limitless possibilities for different variations and extensions.
2. I have not made suggestions of grade level with each plan. In keeping with the tradition of Orff-Schulwerk, the age level for each plan depends on the level of experience for each group of students. However, the lessons are roughly placed in an order of “least difficult” to “difficult.”
3. In order to minimize confusion, I have a guide for explaining some of the terminology and abbreviations in the lesson plans.

Primary/Secondary Concept/Skill: This is the musical concept that is the focus of the lesson. The concept is usually from the basic elements of music (rhythm, melody, harmony, form, etc.)

TLW...This is the objective statement of what the students will learn and how they will demonstrate that knowledge. TLW means “the learner will.”

T = teacher
S = students

B. P. = body percussion (there are four basic body percussion, snap, clap, pat, and stomp)

National Standards = Each lesson plan includes a listing of the National Standards for Music Education that it satisfies.
Assessment

There are unlimited ways in which a teacher can assess student knowledge through this project. However, there are some specific assessment tools that may be helpful! Assessment through performance is the most effective way to gauge musical learning. Therefore, each lesson contains a performance element that should be evaluated with a rubric. I have provided an example of a rubric for Pleeng Wan Koed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed a full 8-beat improvisation in C-pentatonic</th>
<th>0 - did not attempt</th>
<th>1 - unsatisfactory</th>
<th>2 - basic</th>
<th>3 - proficient</th>
<th>4 - distinguished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not attempt to play</td>
<td>Played less than 4 beats</td>
<td>Played 4-7 beats</td>
<td>Played full 8 beats of improvisation, may include brief hesitations or additional beats</td>
<td>Without hesitation, played a full 8 beats of improvisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic scheme built with birthday chant</td>
<td>Did not attempt to play</td>
<td>Rhythm is sporadic, indecipherable, completely random</td>
<td>Some rhythmic scheme used</td>
<td>Used rhythmic scheme to construct</td>
<td>Used rhythmic scheme to create clear beginning, middle, and ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melodic scheme built upon patterns and around a tonal center</td>
<td>Did not attempt to play</td>
<td>Pitch use is disjunct and lacks any type of cohesion; no use of pattern; constant use of a single pitch</td>
<td>Primarily used single pitch; melody is disjunct, somewhat incohesive; little use of patterns</td>
<td>Used a variety of pitches to create a cohesive melody based on patterns and around a tonal center</td>
<td>Used a variety of pitches to create a patterned, cohesive melody with clear beginning, middle, and ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate proper xylophone playing technique</td>
<td>Did not attempt to play</td>
<td>Incorrect mallet position or grip; striking too hard or incorrectly; no hand alteration</td>
<td>General correct mallet position or grip; striking too hard or too soft; little hand alteration</td>
<td>Correct mallet position and grip; proper placement of mallets on the bars; correct pressure and alteration</td>
<td>Correct mallet position and grip; proper placement; correct pressure; use of alteration is seamless</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shippy Shippy Shippy Ship

"Shippy Shippy Shippy Ship" is a game that may or may not be native to Thailand. There are many similar games across numerous cultures. However, this particular version is very popular among youth in Thailand.

"Shippy Shippy Shippy Ship" is ultimately performed in a line of at least 3 people. The person at the front of the line is the leader and must create a new movement every 4 beats. This movement travels down the line with each person repeating the movement of the person before them. "Shippy Shippy Shippy Ship" is a game that is often performed at social functions such as school pep rallies or parties.

The accompanying lesson is meant to introduce students to an enjoyable game that can explore simple duple meter and various non-loco-motor movements.

The primary skill for this lesson is music literacy, allowing students to read various 4-beat rhythmic patterns. The concluding activity of the lesson could be used as a tool for formally assessing students' music reading/sight-reading abilities.
Shippy Shippy Shippy Ship

Primary Skill: Looking ahead is important while music reading

Secondary Concepts: Simple Duple Meter
4/4 Time Signature
Non-locomotor vs. Locomotor Movement

TLW understand how to look ahead while reading music by performing succeeding movements with reasonable accuracy.

Materials:
- Drum Ensemble
- Rhythmic Building Bricks showing various 4-beat patterns

Process: Shippy Shippy Shippy Ship

- T plays a Thai piece in simple duple meter
- During the piece, T performs various 4-beat movements, S echo
- T asks that S should continue to echo, however, while S are echoing, T will change the 4-beat movement
  - S must perform a movement and observe a different movement simultaneously
- T/S perform this new echoing game with the recorded piece
- T asks for a S volunteer to be the T
- T/S continue until all volunteers have gone
- T resumes role and asks S to say, "Shippy shippy shippy ship" while performing the movement game (S echo)
- Once S are confident, divide into groups of 3 (the number of S is less important than making each group is even)
- Each group picks a leader who will come up with a new movement every 4-beats
- Remaining S stand in a line to the side of the leader
- S perform the game
  - The game will somewhat resemble the wave
  - The leader stands at the front of the line, saying "Shippy shippy shippy ship" and performing a new movement every 4-beats
  - Once the leader has completed the first 4-beat movement, the next person in line will echo the movement, saying "Shippy shippy shippy ship," and observing the leader for the next 4-beat movement
  - The third person will join after the second person has completed the first movement
- The various groups compete against one another. The first group to mess up the chain of movements loose.
- For a challenge, S can be arranged into longer lines (groups of 4-8)

- S retrieve drums
- S echo various 4-beat patterns from T
Shippy Shippy Shippy Ship

- S echo various 4-beat patterns from T, while T simultaneously creates a new pattern (just like the previous game)
- S get in small drum circles of three
- One S is the leader, while the others are in clock-wise order
- Leader creates a new rhythmic pattern every 4-beats, the line follows in succession (just like in the previous game)

- T puts four 4-beat building brick patterns on the board (turned around)
- T turns around the 1st card, S say & clap the rhythm
- Process repeated for the remaining cards
- T explains that the point of "Shippy Shippy" was to help S read music. A musician must constantly look ahead while reading music in order to ensure a good performance
- S read the entire 16-beat pattern on the board
- T reveals another 16-beat pattern.
- S sight-read that pattern
- T assesses S ability to sight-read
  - Options include individual or small group assessments

K-4 National Standards:
- #2a – Perform in rhythm and maintain a steady tempo
- #2d – Echo short rhythms and melodic patterns
- #2f – Perform independent instrumental parts while other students sing or play contrasting parts
- #5a – Read whole, half, dotted half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests in 2/4 and 4/4 meter signatures
- #5d – Use standard symbols to notate meter, rhythm, pitch, and dynamics in simple patterns presented by the teacher
- #9c – Identify various uses of music in their daily experiences and describe characteristics that make certain music suitable for each use
Peek! A Thai Hide-and-Seek

The use of literature is a cornerstone of the Orff-Schulwerk and Peek! A Thai Hide-and-Seek by Minfong Ho (ISBN: 076362041-6) is an ideal book to create a positive musical experience for children.

The primary purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to Thai culture, geography, and wildlife. This lesson is intended for younger learners (2nd – 4th grade) and can provide students a great first experience of Thailand!

Of all the lessons in this series, the lesson for Peek! provides the teacher with perhaps the most amount of creative freedom. This lesson is designed to produce many different permutations that can be adapted for a particular classroom environment. For example, though a pre-composed ostinato piece is featured in the lesson, it is a wonderful idea to allow the students to create their own piece using the animal noises in Ho’s book.
Peek! A Thai Hide-and-Seek

Matthew Rooney

Percussion 1
Swip-Swip

Percussion 2
Eechy-eechy egg

Percussion 3
Hru-hruu

Percussion 4
Thoom-thoom

Percussion 5
Jiak-jiak

Percussion 6
Gok-gok

Percussion 7
Hiss

Percussion 8
Hoom praowl hoom praowl
Peek! A Thai Hide-and-Seek

Primary Concept: Layered ostinati are created by rhythmic complements

Secondary Concept: Note Values
Syncopation

TLW perform layered ostinati with movement, body percussion, speech, and unpitched percussion with reasonable accuracy.

Materials:

* Peek! A Thai Hide-and-Seek by Minfong Ho  ISBN: 076362041-6
* Un-pitched Percussion Instruments

Process: Peek! A Thai Hide-and-Seek

- T reads the book to S
- T tells S that this book is from Thailand. S give impressions of Thailand based upon the pictures and characters from the book
- T reads the book again and invites S to make the animal noises
  - S can randomly produce sounds OR
  - S volunteers can offer sounds and all S perform the same thing
- S choose a place in the free space
- T will perform different sounds (from the book) and S move to that noise, paying attention to levels, loco-motor/non-loco-motor, paths, etc.
  - T performs the animal noises in the rhythm of the final composition
- Divide S into small groups, assign each group (or allow them to pick) a different animal noise
  - T can place the animal and accompanying sound on an easy to read cards
- In groups, S must choose a movement for their animal sound. They may use body percussion, loco-motor or non-loco-motor movement, and at least two levels. They must also SAY their animal noise while performing.
- S groups perform for one another
- T reads story again (or have a S volunteer). As the story goes on, S add their animal sounds one at a time (along with the book). They continue throughout the book creating a layered final movement/speech composition.
- Repeat the same process, but allow groups to perform with un-pitched percussion instruments
- Extensions:
  - S can create their own rhythms for the animal sounds in the book
  - S choose their own animals and animal noises to create a story as a class
  - S can use pitched percussion to perform various melodic ostinati
K- 4 National Standards:

#2a – Perform in rhythm with appropriate dynamics and timbre, and maintain a steady tempo
#2b – Perform easy rhythmic patterns accurately and independently on rhythmic and classroom instruments
#2d – Echo short rhythms and melodic patterns
#2e – Perform in groups, blending instrumental timbres, matching dynamic levels, and responding to the cues of a conductor
#2f – Perform independent instrumental parts while other students sing or play contrasting parts
#4a – Create and arrange music to accompany readings or dramatizations
#4c – Use a variety of sound sources when composing
#9d – Identify and describe roles of musicians in various music settings and cultures
The Elephant Song

The Elephant Song, or Pleeng Chang as it is called in Thai, is an incredibly popular folk song in Thailand. Of the Thais I have personally met, all seem to know and love this particular song. There seems to be few other folk songs that can transcend boundaries of age and geography to become one of Thailand's most beloved anthems.

Dr. Kris Rugsaken of Ball State University provided the melody and English translation. However, I have adjusted the English so that it matches the original rhythm of the Thai. Due to its nature as a folk song, there are many versions, including one in Pornprapit Phoasavadi's From Bangkok and Beyond. However, I have chosen to use the version that I learned as an English camp leader in Phuket, Thailand in May 2006.

The lesson for The Elephant Song uses the original Thai language. However, the intention is not for the students to slave through the process of learning these rather difficult words. The teacher introduces the song in Thai and with traditional movements. Based upon this performance, students must guess as to what the song is about. Once the students have correctly inferred the meaning, they can proceed to learn the English version.

The piece can be used to allow students to explore do-based F pentatonic. The melody can be taught by rote, and once learned, a ching and drum part can be added. I have included Phoasavadi's drum part. This is the traditional rhythmic accompaniment for Pleeng Chang. However, students could create their own drum ensemble!
The Elephant Song

Composer

I I I

Chang Chang Chang Where is that elephant? It's absolutely huge it's nose is called a trunk it's

Chang, elephant, chang chang, elephant

pointy teeth are called tusks it has big ears, eyes, and tail

Chang, elephant, chang chang, elephant

Chang, elephant, chang chang, elephant
Primary Concept: Do-based F pentatonic is a five note scale based on do

Secondary Concepts: Form
Non-loco-motor Movement

TLW sing and play a melody in do-based F pentatonic with reasonable accuracy.

Materials:
“The Elephant Song”
Percussion Ensemble
Rhythm Building Bricks

Process: The Elephant Song

• T sings song in Thai with movement, S try to “translate” song based on the movement:

   In Thai:
   Chang Chang Chang                       Hold arms out and take giant steps
   Non kurry i cha roo plow                Hold arms up as if asking question
   Changong tua toy myee bow               Spread arms out to show big size
   Jamaok yow yow rik wa nwuang           Bring elbow to nose, let arm hang
   Me keyoo tay ya rik wa nwah            Stick out index fingers around mouth
   Me hoo, me ta, hung yow                 Point to ears, eyes, and turn while
                                           wiggling your hand at your bottom
                                           like a tail

   In English (except for 1st line, “Chang” means elephant)
   Chang Chang Chang
   Where is that elephant?
   It’s absolutely huge!
   Its nose is called a trunk
   Its pointy teeth are tusks

• T sings song in English with movement, S simultaneously imitate movements
• S sit, echo line by line
• T asks, “How many lines?” (6)
• S echo line by line while thinking “Which lines have the same rhythm?” (2,3,4)
• T labels them as B.
• S echo lines 2-4 while patting.
• S pat/say lines 2-4, while T claps/says remainder.
• S echo 1st line with stomps.
• S do/say lines 1-4. T does remainder.
• Repeat song. “How is line 5 similar/different from l. 2-4” (one extra note)
• S clap echo line 5
• S do/say line 1-5. T does last line.
• S echo last line.
The Elephant Song

• S choose body percussion for the piece
• S sing entire song with body percussion

• At instruments: Set up in F pentatonic. What do you know?
• S echo line 1 (on C).
• S play. T adds line 2.
• S echo line 2.
• S play lines 1 & 2.
• S repeat. T plays rest:
  o S listen for repeated note patterns.
  o What lines? (4-5)
  o What note? (F)
• S echo lines 4-5.
• S play 1-2, 4-5.
  o REMIND of line 3 in between! T plays remainder.
• S echo line 3.
• S play lines 1-5. T plays line 6.
• S echo line 6.
• S play entire melody.

• S play entire melody. T adds “ching” on F with glockenspiel.
• Class divides ½, ½ on melody, ½ on ching. Switch.
• S volunteers play “ching” on glockenspiel.

• S echo by saying:
  o Chang, elephant, chang chang, elephant
• S echo body percussion:
  o Chang = stomp
  o Elephant = pat
• S play/say pattern (repeat)
• S retrieve tubano drums.
• T reviews low/high tone. (use short echo patterns.)
• S echo on drums:
  o Chang = low tone
  o Elephant = high tone
• Divide class ½, ½ on melody, ½ on drums. Switch.
• Performing “The Elephant Song”
  Most S on SX, AX
  2-3 glockenspiel volunteers
  Rest on drums

National Standards:
#1c – Sing from memory a varied repertoire of songs representing genres and styles from diverse cultures
#2a – Perform on pitch, in rhythm, with appropriate dynamics and timbre, and maintain a steady tempo
#2b – Perform easy rhythmic and melodic patterns accurately and independently on rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic classroom instruments

#2c – Perform expressively a varied repertoire of music representing diverse genres and styles

#2d – Echo short rhythms and melodic patterns

#2e – Perform in groups, blending instrumental timbres, matching dynamic levels, and responding to the cues of a conductor

#2f – Perform independent instrumental parts while other students sing or play contrasting parts

#6b – Demonstrate perceptual skills by moving, by answering questions about, and by describing aural examples of music of various styles representing diverse cultures

#9b – Describe in simple terms how elements of music are used in music examples from various cultures of the world
Poong Paang

Poong Paang is a children's game that I learned from high school students from Hat Yai, Thailand in May of 2007. Though original to southern Thailand, Poong Paang is popular throughout the nation and was even featured in Pornprapit Phoasavadi's book, From Bangkok and Beyond.

In the game, one child is "it." This child is blindfolded and labeled "Poong Paang" (the Thai words for fishing net), while the other children are the "fish." The game represents the fishing culture that dominates the southern peninsular provinces of Thailand. The "fish" travel in a circle around Poong Paang, chanting the song three times. Upon completion of the third repeat, the "fish" ask Poong Paang, "Dead, or alive?" The question refers to whether or not the "fish" can move while the blindfolded Poong Paang attempts to tag them. If Poong Paang says "dead," the "fish" can't move at all. If Poong Paang says "alive," the "fish" must keep their feet planted, but may move to avoid being tagged.

This lesson features the English translation of Poong Paang provided by students from the Prince of Songklab University English Camp in Surat Thani, Thailand. I have since adjusted the words to fit the rhythm of the original poem. The two accompanying ostinati were inspired by the body percussion exercises in Gunild Keetman's Rhythmische Ubung. However, students should be welcome to come up with their own ostinati!

Poong Paang is intended to teach students about two significant aspects of Thai classical/folk music. First is the "ching," a metallic sound (usually a cymbal) that accompanies a melody on the weak beat. Second is the contrast between wood, skin, and metallic sounds that help to give Thai instrumental music its unique sound. (Morton, 1976, p. 22)
Poong Paang

Traditional Children's Game

Voice

Oh Poong Paang Poong Paang is blind.

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Fish are sneaking in and out

Percussion 3

Poong Paang it's a poor blind Poong Paang it's a poor blind

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Fish sneak in/ out blind Poong Paang

Perc. 3

fish are sneaking in and out

Poong Paang it's a poor blind Poong Paang it's a poor blind
Primary Concept: Thai music has three basic timbres (woods, skins, and metals.)

Secondary Concept: Layered Ostinati

TLW perform the three timbres of Thai music through melody and accompanying ostinati.

Materials:

Poong Paang from “From Bangkok and Beyond”
Un-pitched Percussion (woods, skins, and metals)

Process: Poong Paang

Oh, Poong Paang
Poong Paang is blind
Fish sneak in/out
Blind Poong Paang

- T introduces information on Thailand and plays a listening example
- S pat steady beat while T says poem
- T writes “Poong Paang” on the board, explains pronunciation and meaning
- S echo poem line by line (repeat if needed)
- S say 1st and last line while T says middle
- S echo lines 2 & 3
- S say entire poem with steady beat (switching steady beat placement on each repetition)
- S echo clapping on beats 2 & 4 while saying the poem
- T explains the “ching” sound used in Thai folk songs
  - Play recorded example
- S volunteer transfers ching to finger cymbal (T demonstrates playing technique)
- S volunteer plays while other S repeat poem and clap the ching part
- S clap/say poem. T adds ostinato #1 with body percussion

Fish are sneaking in and out (repeat)
\[ \text{p p cl cl p p st} \]

- T asks, “What is this?” OSTINATO! (short repeated accompanying pattern)
- S echo ostinato #1
- Class is divided in \( \frac{1}{2} \). \( \frac{1}{2} \) say/clap poem, \( \frac{1}{2} \) say/b.p. ostinato #1 (Switch)
- S play poem, ostinato #1, and ching
- S clap/say poem. T adds ostinato #2 with body percussion

Poong Paang, it’s a poor blind (repeat)
\[ \text{cl cl p p cl sn} \]
Poong Paang

• S echo ostinato #2
• Class is divided in ½. ½ on poem, ½ on ostinato #2 (Switch)
• Class is divided in 1/3. 1/3 on poem, 1/3 on ostinato #1, 1/3 on ostinato #2 (Switch as needed)
• S play poem, ostinati, and ching

• T presents S with hand drums, jingle bells, and rhythm sticks. T asks, “What is each instrument made out of?” (skin, metal, wood)
• T plays an example of Thai ranaat music and asks S to listen for the three different timbres.
• Class is divided into 3 groups. Instruments are dispersed in the free space into 3 groups (according to classification – skin, metal, wood)
• Woods play “Fish are sneaking in and out.” Drums play “Poong Paang, it’s a poor blind.” Metals play the off-beat ching part and chant
• Each group performs and parts are layered in (beginning with skins)
• Stations rotate

Game:
• S form a circle
• One player is chosen as Poong Paang, the other are fish
• PP is blindfolded and placed in the middle of the circle created by the fish
• Fish rotate around Poong Paang saying the chant and playing the ching part 3x and freeze
• The fish call out “Dead or alive?”
• Poong Paang replies:
  o Dead = Fish must freeze and remain absolutely still no matter what
  o Alive = Fish must freeze their feet into the ground, but can change their posture to avoid Poong Paang
• Poong Paang (still blindfolded) approaches the fish and whoever he/she tags becomes the new Poong Paang
• Each retired Poong Paang will grab an instrument and accompany the chant
• Whoever is the last to become the Poong Paang is the winner!
  o (As the game continues, the circle will need to condense. Once it is condensed as much as possible the other S can help the Poong Paang by shouting out directions)

Formal Assessment
Use the game as a formal assessment.
1. Can students say the poem and perform the ching part in the circle?
2. As students are eliminated, can the students keep the ostinato to accompany the chant?
   a. T can assign people to particular ostinati, or S can choose.
   b. S may switch after each repetition of the game if they choose to do so.
K-4 National Standards:

#2a – Perform in rhythm, with appropriate dynamics and timbre, and maintain a steady tempo

#2b – Perform easy rhythmic patterns accurately and independently on rhythmic classroom instruments

#2c – Perform expressively a varied repertoire of music representing diverse genres and styles

#2d – Echo short rhythms and melodic patterns

#2e – Perform in groups, while blending instrumental timbres

#2f – Perform independent instrumental parts while other students play contrasting parts

#6b – Demonstrate perceptual skills by moving, by answering questions about, and by describing aural examples of music of various styles representing diverse cultures

#6d – Identify the sounds of a variety of instruments from various cultures

#9b – Describe in simple terms how elements of music are used in music examples from various cultures of the world
Pleeng Wan Koed

Improvisation is important part of traditional Thai ranaat, or xylophone, music (Morton, 1976). *Pleeng Wan Koed* is intended to provide students with the experience of melodically improvising with a Thai folk song.

I found *Pleeng Wan Koed* in *From Bangkok and Beyond* by Pornprapit Phoasavadi but expanded into a full lesson that has students using both drums and xylophones. As explained by Phoasavadi, *Pleeng Wan Koed* is used as a happy birthday song. Interestingly enough, the most prevalent happy birthday song in Thailand is the same piece that is used in American birthday celebrations (an interesting note worth pointing out to students.)

*Pleeng Wan Koed* begins with question/answer exercises on the drums. Based upon their individual birthdays, students ultimately decide the rhythmic scheme that will be used for their future melodic improvisations.

To begin improvising on xylophones, students begin by playing the rhythmic scheme on the tonic note (C). Each time, students are permitted to pick one additional note until all five pentatonic notes are used. Once this is accomplished, students can improvise in progressively smaller groups until they are playing alone. This process assists the students who may feel uncomfortable with improvising.

The final intention is for the piece to be played in a rondo form with the teacher playing the *Pleeng Wan Koed* melody on recorder for the A sections, while students improvise for the contrasting sections. However, the staff notation is included and could be taught to students on either recorder or xylophone.
Pleeng Wan Koed

A Thai Happy Birthday Song

Recorder

\[ \text{Staff notation image here} \]
Primary Concept: 8-beat melodic improvisation with do-based C pentatonic

Secondary Concepts: Rondo Form

TLW improvise an 8-beat melodic pattern on xylophone in C pentatonic.

Materials:
- Pleeng Wan Koed from "From Bangkok and Beyond"
- Orff Percussion Ensemble

Process: Pleeng Wan Koed "A Thai Happy Birthday Song"

- T plays recording of the piece as S enter the room
- S retrieve drums
- T asks S when their birthday is (give the month and the date)
- Each S answers in a normal speaking voice
- T asks S "When's your birthday?" using rhythmic call on the drum.
  - Ta-mi ta-di (rest, rest) (L - h h h)
  - S respond by saying in rhythm in 2 beats
- T asks S "When's your birthday?" using rhythmic call on the drum. S respond by playing their month and date in rhythm
  - Ask all S to join the T on the question (have them echo 1st)
- S choose 2-4 birthdays with different rhythms (adding up to an 8-beat phrase)
  - (the number of dates depends on length of each date pattern)
- S assign body percussion to each date. S practice rhythmic pattern, or "birthday chant"
  - Example) April 5th, March 18th, February 21st, July 5th
- Once comfortable, S transfer to the high tone on drums

- At xylophones: S play rhythm of "birthday chant" on C (either C is OK!)
- S choose one note in addition to C to play. HOWEVER, S must play last month/date on C
- S choose an additional note for a total of 3...repeat process until all 5 pentatonic notes are used

- T plays Pleeng Wan Koed melody on recorder
  - T tells S that when they hear the end of the melody, say rest, and then begin improvising with the birthday chant as a class (all at the same time!)
  - T explains that in Thailand, most people sing the traditional "Happy Birthday" song. However, this is another popular birthday song of Thailand
- Play as a rondo with T on recorder for A sections and full group improvisations for contrasting sections
- Play as a rondo with T and groups of 2 - 4
- Play as a rondo with T and individuals
Beginning with full group and continuing to small groups can give shy S a chance to improvise without feeling too nervous
Other S should say the birthday chant to “help out” their classmates who are improvising

- Extension Ideas
  - Use this lesson as a formal assessment tool for improvisation
  - Have S improvise on drums or other unpitched percussion
  - Repeat the “birthday chant” to allow for 16-beat melodic improvisations
  - Allow the S to notate the “birthday chant”
  - Process out the melody to be played on recorder or xylophone

K-4 National Standards:
  #2a – Perform on pitch, in rhythm, with appropriate dynamics and timbre, and maintain a steady tempo
  #3a – Improvise “answers” in the same style to given rhythmic and melodic phrases
  #3d – Improvise short songs and instrumental pieces, using a variety of sound sources
  #5a – Read whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests in 2/4 and 4/4 meter signatures
  #6c – Use appropriate terminology in explaining music and music performances
  #7a – Devise criteria for evaluating performances and improvisations
  #9d – Identify and describe roles of musicians in various music settings and cultures
Thai is an extremely difficult language for many Westerners to comprehend. This is due to the many double vowels and tones that help to define the unique sound of the language. Therefore, in this project, I have deemphasized the importance of teaching songs in the original Thai. However, I felt that it was important that I make an exception with the lesson for Fon Tok. Students should have at least some experience with the native language of various cultures. Fon Tok's call and response form makes it the ideal opportunity to satisfy this goal.

I learned Fon Tok from Dr. Kris Rugsaken of Ball State University. Dr. Kris provided the English translation and allowed me to record him performing it. I transcribed the song and adapted the English translation to fit the original rhythm of the Thai language.

Fon Tok literally translates to "the rain." The song is a chant that is performed in a call/response form with teacher and students. To prepare the students for the Thai, the lesson begins with a progression of speech activities that begin with normal speech and end with a poem that has the same content and rhythm of the original material. It is important not to introduce the Thai until the rhythm of the English translation is confident.

Though the translation is intended to make it easier to pronounce, here is a break down of the sounds:

Fon tok (phone talk)
Daed ork (dead ork)
Nok kajork khao rung (nok kajork cow rung)
Mae mai sai seu (may my sci sooey)
Kap piiseu yuu khang lang (cap pee-eesooey you-ou kong long)

The ostinati were inspired by the Rhythmische Übung. However, students should feel free to create their own ostinati! Also, teachers and students should experiment with different ways of performing the melody of Fon Tok.
Fon Tok

transcribed by Matthew Rooney

Bass Drum 1

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} \\
\text{Fon tak} & \text{nok ka jork} & \text{kha o rung} & \\
\end{array} \]

Bass Drum 2

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} \\
daed ork & \text{mae mai} & \text{sai seu kap} & \text{pii seu yuu} \\
\end{array} \]

Bass Drum 3

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} \\
\text{B. Dr. 1} & \text{B. Dr. 2} & \text{B. Dr. 3} & \\
\end{array} \]

B. Dr. 1

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} \\
\text{Fon tak} & \text{daed ork} & \text{nok ka jork} & \text{kha o rung} \\
\end{array} \]

B. Dr. 2

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} \\
\text{khang lung} & \text{with} & \text{but-ter-fly on her back} & \text{with} \\
\end{array} \]

B. Dr. 3

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} \\
\text{B. Dr. 1} & \text{B. Dr. 2} & \text{B. Dr. 3} & \\
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} \\
\text{pii seu yu} & \text{hang lung} & \text{Fon tak} & \text{daed ork} \\
\end{array} \]

B. Dr. 2

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} \\
\text{back} & \text{with} & \text{but-ter-fly on her back} & \text{with} \\
\end{array} \]

B. Dr. 3

\[ \begin{array}{cccc}
\frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} & \frac{2}{4} \\
rain drops & \text{etc.} & \\
\end{array} \]
Fon Tok

B. Dr. 1
mae mai  
sai  
seu kap  
pi  
seu  
yuu  
khang  
lung  

B. Dr. 2
back  
with  
but-ter-fly  
on  
her  
back  
with  
but-ter-fly  
on  
h  

B. Dr. 3

rain drops!
**Primary Concept:** Thai folk songs are traditionally in call and response form

**Secondary Concepts:** Simple Duple Meter  
Layered Ostinati

TLW perform call and response form with speech, body percussion, and drums with reasonable accuracy.

**Materials:**  
*Fon Tok*  
Drum/Percussion Ensemble

**Process: Fon Tok “Rain”**
- T asks S, “How are you today?”
- S respond
- T asks S a question that requires a longer answer, S respond
- T repeats same procedure, S must answer the first question with 2 syllables, and the second question with a certain number of syllables (decided upon by T)
- T repeats again, this time, S use the same answer and accompany it with their choice of body percussion (S are still independent)
- S are arranged into groups of 2-3. S must choose two answers that they prefer. S must choose body percussion
- Groups perform their call/response pattern

- T presents a poem, S volunteers explore ways to read it
  - *Rain drops*
  - *Sun shines*
  - *Birds come back to their nests*
  - *She has a butterfly on her old back*

- S echo the poem line by line (T says it with rhythm of “fon tok”)
- S echo line 2 and repeat it after T says line 1
- S echo line 4 and repeat it after T says line 2
- T/S say entire poem (alternating with T saying line 1)
- Once S are comfortable, T asks if some S can perform the T part
- S (in 2 groups) say entire poem

- T explains that there is a Thai question/answer word play that is similar called “Fon Tok”
- S maintain steady beat while T chants “Fon Tok”  
  - *Fon tok* The rain is dropping  
  - *Daed ork* The sun is shining  
  - *Nok kajork khao rung* The sparrows are returning to their nests  
  - *Mae mai sai seu* The widow is putting her blouse  
  - *Kap piiseu yuu khang lang* With butterfly on her back

- When T says, “fon tok,” S respond “daed ork”
Fon Tok

- S say line 2, T says remainder
- S echo, “Mae mai sai seu”
- When T says, “nok kajork khao rung,” S respond “mae mai sai seu”
- S say line 2/4, T says remainder
- S echo, “Kap piiseu yuu khang lang”
- S echo lines 4 & 5 after T says “nok kajork khao rung”
- T/S say entire poem in call/response {T = 1, 3} {S = 2, 4, 5}
  - T can use visual aides to assist with the words
- Once comfortable, T claps with words, S pat
- Continue and T asks if some S can volunteer to perform the T’s part
- S perform entire piece with body percussion

- S retrieve drums
- T plays each line on drum, S echo
- T performs lines 1 & 3, S perform remainder
- Divide class in ½, ½ perform T part, other perform remainder (switch)
- Once comfortable, all S perform entire poem
- T labels this as the melody
- S echo, “With butterfly on her back”
- S pat new part
- S play new part on high tones
- Divide class in ½, ½ perform melody, ½ perform new ostinato (switch)
- T plays second ostinato (“Rain Drops”), S join in
- Divide class in 1/3, 1/3 perform melody, 1/3 perform “with butterfly...”, 1/3 perform “rain drops” (switch 2x)
- Assign the melody to high drums, ostinato 1 to medium drums, and ostinato 2 to low drums
- Perform entire piece with three types of drums

5-8 National Standards:

- #2a - Perform on at least one instrument accurately and independently, alone and in small and large ensembles, with good posture and good playing position
- #2c - Perform music representing diverse genres and cultures, with expression appropriate for the work being performed
- #8a - Compare in two or more arts how the characteristic materials of each art can be used to transform similar events, scenes, emotions, or ideas into works of art
- #9c - Compare, in several cultures of the world, functions music serves, roles of musicians, and conditions under which music is typically performed
Sounding the Surf

*Sounding the Surf* is the most advanced lesson plan in this project. It is meant for students who have extensive experience with xylophone playing and are accustomed to learning pieces by rote.

The lesson for *Sounding the Surf* was inspired by a live ranaat performance that I attended in May 2007. Ranaat is the traditional xylophone ensemble in Thai classical music. Its instruments resemble Orff xylophones, but shaped like a boat. The prevalence of xylophone music in Thailand is one reason why the Orff-Schulwerk translates so well. The performance I attended was at the Rose Garden, a famous cultural center northwest of Bangkok. I recorded the performance on a small tape recorder and subsequently transcribed and arranged *Sounding the Surf* for Orff ensemble.

The primary concept of this lesson is to teach advanced ranaat playing techniques to students who have a solid Orff xylophone background. Three attributes of this technique are the use of octaves, mallet rolls, and the use tempo fluctuations to create variety.

This piece should be processed by rote, a teaching technique that is standard in the Thai ranaat tradition. Once the notes are learned, students should feel free to accelerate the tempo and repeat the melodic material as many times as they deem appropriate. Another performance practice of Thai ranaat is the use of a leading xylophone soloist to establish the melody of the piece before the other instrumentalists join. (Morton, 1976) Instead of having all players for the introduction, a teacher could reward an outstanding student by giving him or her a solo that would set the tempo for the piece.

This would also be a great opportunity for the teacher to show the Orff ensemble video and pictures of a real Thai ranat ensemble. YouTube provides a number of high-quality ranaat performances from adults and children that could be very beneficial for students to view.
Sounding the Surf

H. M. King Prajadhipok

transcribed and arranged for Orff ensemble by Matthew Rooney
Sounding the Surf

Primary Concept: Thai classical ranaat playing features rolling, octaves, and tempo variations

Secondary Concept: Octaves
   Mallet Rolls
   Tempo (Accelerando, Ritardando)

TLW perform the three major aspects of Thai ranaat style on Orff xylophones with a multi-layered piece.

Materials:
   Sounding the Surf
   Orff Xylophone Ensemble

Process: Sounding the Surf
   • At instruments: Leave as is
   • T explains that xylophones are used in Thai classical music. The instruments are called ranaats are shaped as a boat (show a picture). All of the bars are left on the instruments to resemble the Thai instruments
   • S echo by rote:
     o start on g: g c' g a g
     o start on a: a b c' d' e' (walk up to e')
     o Play both patterns together
   • T plays phrase 1st, S echo
   • T labels this phrase A
   • S echo by rote:
     o start on d': d' g' d' e' g'
     o start on a': a' g' e' d' c' (walk down to c', skip f')
   • T plays phrase 1st, S echo
   • T labels this phrase B
   • T/S play phrase A & B (T 1st, S echo)
   • T/S play phrase A & B (S 1st, S echo)
   • Divide class in ½, ½ begin, other ½ echo (switch)
   • S echo by rote:
     o start on e': e' a' e' g' a'
     o start on g': g' f' e' d' e'
   • T plays phrase 1st, S echo
   • T labels this phrase C
   • Divide class in ½, ½ begin, other ½ echo (switch)
   • S play A B C B
     o SX begin, AX/BX echo
   • Just for fun, T plays a ranaat selection and asks the S how the performance differs
     o There are many answers, but try to get them to notice that the performers are playing in octaves
Sounding the Surf

- T demonstrates this technique on the instruments (however, S will not be able to do this for all notes)
- S practice playing melody in octaves independently. S decide which sections are possible to play in octaves and decide whether or not they want to perform any part of the piece in this style

- **Bass Xylophone Part**
  - S echo by rote:
    - start on c': C' A a b c' d' E'
    - start on g': G' E' a' g' e' d' C'
    - Play both patterns together (label a & b)
    - start on a': A' G' g' f' e' d' E'
    - Play all three patterns together (label c)
  - T explains that for the half notes, S will roll
  - T explains the roll technique
  - T plays recording of a Thai ranaat ensemble. S listen for the heavy use of rolling among all parts
  - S practice independently
  - S play entire BX part w/ rolls
  - T asks S if this part sounds familiar
  - The BX part is a version of the SX/AX part. It is reduced and played at a different tempo. T explains that in Thai music, various xylophone parts play at different tempi.

- S play all parts together

  - **Introduction**
    - T plays the intro and asks if it sounds familiar
    - It is the A pattern \( \frac{1}{2} \) as fast
    - T plays intro again, S receive independent time to figure it out
    - T asks S volunteer to play
    - S echo
    - T plays intro, at the end, T adds a glissando down and back up
    - S echo glissando
    - S play entire introduction
    - S play introduction with rolls on all notes

    - S play intro and main part of the piece

    - Coda is identical to introduction except with a roll at the end (continue to roll throughout as well)

    - S play entire piece

- **Drum Part**
  - S echo pattern
  - Once solid, S repeat
Sounding the Surf

- S play entire piece with drum part

- Once piece is learned, S repeat the main section of the piece however many times they desire. Each repeat goes a slightly faster tempo. However, the intro and coda must be played at the same slow tempo. This is indicative of traditional ranaat performance.

5-8 National Standards:

- #2a – Perform on at least one instrument accurately and independently, alone and in small and large ensembles, with good posture, playing position, and mallet control
- #2c – Perform music representing diverse genres and cultures, with expression appropriate for the work being performed
- #2e – Perform with expression and technical accuracy and varied repertoire of instrumental literature with a level of difficulty of 3, on a scale of 1 to 6, including some solos performed from memory
- #6c – Demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of meter, rhythm, tonality, and intervals in their analyses of music
- #7a – Develop criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of music performances and compositions and apply the criteria in their personal listening and performing
- #9a – Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures
Bibliography


Helpful Books to Use in the Classroom


Helpful CD's to Use in the Classroom


