

“Fantasia Baetica”/Flamenco Music Culture Lesson Plan
with Audio and Text Links

Aim

To have students participate in the performance of the rhythmic, melodic and special effect elements found in the the “*Fantasia Baetica*” by Manuel de Falla and develop an understanding of the structural and cultural dimensions of the music.

Computer and Audio Resources

- My performance of the complete “*Fantasia Baetica*” recorded in March 2008, is on the main lesson web page and may also be heard at:

http://specialneedsinmusic.com/audio/piano/pianoteq/pianoteq_de_falla/pnoteq_de_falla_fantasia_baetica_alt.mp3

- “*Kaila Rochelle’s Fantasia Baetica Workshop*” main lesson web page:

http://specialneedsinmusic.com/multi_med_less/fantasia_baetica_lesson/fantasia_lesson_main.html

- There are wonderful flamenco dance and guitar performance videos available to use as guides for classroom performance activities. In some circumstances the flamenco guitar video, presented by Sal Bonavita, might even be used as an accompaniment in classroom activities:

http://specialneedsinmusic.com/multi_med_less/fantasia_baetica_lesson/fantasia_lesson_flamenco_gtr.html

- There is an “*Introductory Flamenco Music and Dance Web Page*”

http://specialneedsinmusic.com/multi_med_less/fantasia_baetica_lesson/fantasia_lesson_flamenco_music.html

- A folk song arrangement of the “*Intermezzo*” from the “*Fantasia Baetica*”:

http://specialneedsinmusic.com/folk_song_pages/de_falla_intermez_folk_song_08_0525.html

Introduction and Motivation

- show a picture of Manuel de Falla:

http://specialneedsinmusic.com/multi_med_less/fantasia_baetica_lesson/graphics_fantasia_lesson/de_falla_bio_brief.jpg

- discuss a little about the life of de Falla and his music.
- there is a short de Falla bio link on the main lesson web page
- suggested opening statement:

"Today we are going to play music by the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla. He lived in Spain about a hundred years ago. Does anyone know where Spain is on the map?"

- continue the lesson with a brief music related geography/history map discussion.

- engage the students with a colorful world map or classroom globe.
- there are three map graphics of Western Europe, Spain, and the Andalusia region of southern Spain available on “flamenco music and dance culture web page.”

- students point at a location, engage in a discussion about the language(s) spoken in that region (Spanish or other); (do any of the students speak Spanish?)
 - geographic locations of interest include Spain, France, the Middle East, North Africa, Italy (Rome), and Greece.
- adjust to fit the levels of the class.
- higher functioning, middle functioning lower functioning.
- show a picture of a flamenco dancer.
- discuss a little about flamenco dancing
 - see the *“Introductory Flamenco Music and Dance Web Page.”*
 - a flamenco dancing movie link is available at the *“Fantasia Baetica Workshop”* main lesson web page.

Process for Achieving Student Music Performance Participation

The students will be divided into different instrumental, vocal and conducting groups. The teacher can play the piece on the piano or use an audio recording of *“Fantasia Baetica”*, while the students play or sing structured pitch and rhythmic patterns. In addition to performing specific preset music figures, students can also improvise at different levels or varied degrees. Music figures may range from a single repeated note to more complex rhythmic and melodic patterns depending on the abilities of the student. This approach is consistent with differentiated instruction. It allows every student within the group to be successful without competing.

Activities Related to the Performance of the Music

1. playing various percussion instruments such as tambourine, drum, bells, and rhythm sticks.
2. playing chimes of various sizes.
3. playing rhythms and percussive gestures on a guitar open tuned to major or minor chords.
4. singing repeated note patterns, the gypsy motifs, and intermezzo section
5. playing 4 to 5 pitches in repeated patterns on pitched instruments such as:
 - the xylophone
 - midi keyboard
 - acoustic piano
 - roll up piano
 - recorder
 - violin
 - guitar
6. playing glissandi on one or more of the following instruments:
 - small hand held harps
 - zithers
 - chromatic xylophones
 - midi keyboard using different voices
 - acoustic piano

Please note that the glissandi will not be an exact replication of the *“Fantasia Baetica”* score. Students will play their own improvised glissandi using either the white keys or the black keys. They can use different voices in the midi keyboard. The teacher and/or the para(s) can demonstrate how to do this.

7. conducting with expressions and gestures to indicate dynamic levels and entrance cues.
8. counting out the beats to various time signatures and meters

Suggested Groupings for Student Participation

This piece can work with one group or as many five. Every teacher has different resources available and a unique blend of students. The “*Fantasia Baetica*” lesson is that one can be very flexible in the approach. The teacher is the music director and should provide vocal and/or visual prompts for the groups.

Group A

percussion such as drums, rhythm sticks, cymbals, bells,
percussion open tuned guitar, and tambourines for steady beats and syncopated improvisations.

Group B

singers for presenting repeated note patterns, intermezzo melody and gypsy like melodies.

Group C

chimes, harps, xylophones, midi keyboards, roll up pianos, for glissandos.

Group D

conductors (I suggest maximum 3 at a time).

Group E

xylophones, midi keyboards, roll up pianos violins, recorders, for specific note patterns, pedal tones or drones.

Related Activities:

Music Appreciation, History and Documentation of Student Practice and Performance.

The ongoing activities associated with the creation of a “*Fantasia Baetica Classroom Scrapbook*” should include both audio and visual examples of student work.

The musical scrapbook might include:

1. articles and pictures of Manuel de Falla.
2. maps of the various regions related to the music of “*Fantasia Baetica*” including: Spain (Andalusia), France, the Middle East, North Africa, Italy (Rome), and Greece.
3. pictures of the students playing their instruments.
4. index cards of the various meters used in the “*Fantasia Baetica*.”
5. index cards of repeated pitched note patterns, i.e. abcde.
6. index cards indicating the dynamics used; these can include pp, p, f and ff.
7. student essays about their reactions to the piece.
8. pictures of flamenco dancers.
9. a short student essay about the life of Manuel de Falla.
10. a short student essay about the particular group to which the student belonged;
i.e. the glissando group. This essay could include the students own insights about working with others to create a group effect in music.
11. graphic organizers that visually describe the form of the piece which in my opinion is an ABA form with a coda. The intermezzo is the B part.
12. charts of note patterns used.
13. a pocket in the back of the scrapbook that contains a class recording (cd or cassette) of the piece in various stages.

Suggested Questions for Students

1. What instrument(s) are you playing?
2. What group do you belong to?
3. Can you point to Spain on the map?

Culminating Performance Activities

1. The class can perform the entire piece during an Assembly/Workshop and also present the scrapbook.
2. The class can make a video and/or audio recording of their practice and performance sessions.

Conclusion and Personal Observations

I first studied "*Fantasia Baetica*" in 1998 with German Diez. He believed I could play this piece and I was desperate to learn it. Having chronic pain and nerve damage made the learning of this piece a great challenge. I did not always have the ability to concentrate and zero in on difficult and complex rhythmic and metric problems. I had strong feelings about the expression of the piece and I recorded it in 2000. I am grateful for German Diez's belief in my ability to play this piece and for the fantastic guidance he gave me in learning this music. However, I wanted to relearn this piece again so that I could do a better job. Music performance and recording technology, not available at the time of my initial study of this piece, helped me to focus more on the rhythmic problems and to concentrate and understand their execution.

"*Fantasia Baetica*" was for me a special challenge that I could not face again without a team effort. Many thanks to my project manager/music coach/recording engineer Kenneth for helping me interpret and understand this piece in terms of the many difficult elements of rhythm and meter. His use of technology to teach me, created a path to the ideal world of music.

Professor Elise Sobol states in her book¹:

No matter what end of the spectrum your students are, their self esteem has to be enhanced by the activities in the music program. Their feelings of self worth need to be increased by recognition of the valuable contributions they make.

I am pleased to say that not only have my students benefited from performing "*Fantasia Baetica*", but I have as well. Professor Sobol's insights into the need for increased self esteem for people overcoming both visible and invisible challenges applies to me too. My "*Fantasia Baetica Experience*" is an affirmation that I can overcome my own unique challenges.

¹ Elise Sobol, *An Attitude and Approach for Teaching Music to Special Learners: a Teacher's Guide to Comprehensive Music Technique* (Raleigh NC: Pentland Press, Inc., 2001), p. 25.

In closing, I would like to share the following observations by Professor Emeritus Noah Chreshevsky² about the my recording. It underscores the team work between Kenneth and myself.

Ken,

I was eager to hear the de Falla, and I did hear it--and with so much pleasure and admiration at Kaila's playing of this huge piece, and your skills at making it all come together. It's a very difficult piece in many ways, including the transitions, and of course the moment-to-moment technical challenges that Kaila has mastered impressively.

Overall, I can't tell where her playing ends and your editing begins; that, I am sure, is a tribute to your own mastery of the sophisticated techniques you use to edit the material. I don't know that for sure, since it all seems so smooth. It's possible that the fantasia was played like that from scratch, but I think it is more likely that you and Kaila, together, have made this very beautiful performance.

² Associate Professor of Music, The Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College, City University of New York.