

Using BandQuest in the General Music Classroom Grandmother Song

Thought BandQuest was conceived and launched by the American Composers Forum as a program for middle level band programs, it also provides unique resources for general music. The interactive CD ROMs prepared for six of the BandQuest works includes information, images, lessons, and other teaching materials that can be used to develop music-centered interdisciplinary lessons.

The materials were developed using a curriculum planning strategy called the Facets Model (Barrett, McCoy, & Veblen, 1997). The Facets Model is a comprehensive approach for studying musical works and helping students relate music to other disciplines in meaningful ways. The model has been used to create curriculum in many settings, but especially in designing the content of the *BandQuest* CD-ROMs.

Eight essential questions make up the basic facets model. The questions are grouped into categories that encourage teachers and students to address fundamental ideas about the origins of the work, its components and form, and the range of expressive meanings it conveys. For in-depth information on the facets model, go the BandQuest web site at <http://www.bandquest.org/teachers/facets.shtml>.

The interactive nature of the CD ROM program is an enticing means for motivating students. Each CD is organized in the same way. The visual arrangement is an audio dash board of a traveling van. The main content and curriculum section appear on the dash as buttons. When the mouse rolls over the buttons, the topic titles appear. The button titles include:

- Teacher's Guide
- Play Button (audio and video versions of the piece)
- About Band Quest
- Meet the Composer (video introduction with student interviewers)
- Composer Biography
- Program Notes
- Guided Listening (two formats: listening map and follow the score)
- Rhythm Practice
- Create (arranging, improvising, orchestrating, alter the music in some fashion)
- Games
- 3 Interdisciplinary buttons featuring topics related to the piece

SOME STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES FOR USING THE BANDQUEST CD ROMS AS GENERAL MUSIC TEACHING TOOLS

1. *Develop engaging listening lessons that promote musical understanding of music in Native American traditions*

The CD ROM for *Grandmother Song* provides general music teachers with many tools for developing listening lessons in one convenient place. Use the CD ROM:

- As an audio CD for listening (PLAY button)
- With a projector or video monitor to listen to the work while viewing the University of Minnesota Wind Band perform the music (PLAY button)
- To provide contextual information about the composer Brent Michael Davids and what inspired the work (MEET THE COMPOSER)

2. *Provide unique tools for analyzing and responding to music*

The CD ROM includes materials that assist students in perceiving musical form, the use of key elements, and significant landmarks in the music. Resources to use for analyzing and responding include:

- A print version of the listening map (TEACHERS GUIDE)
- A score that scrolls across the screen with color highlighted measures (GUIDED LISTENING)
- An illustrated listening map that moves through time with the music (GUIDED LISTENING)
- Program notes for the piece are available for printing (TEACHERS GUIDE)
- A student project for researching and writing their own program notes. Format and forms are available to download (TEACHERS GUIDE and REFERENCES and RESOURCES)
- Materials on the Interdisciplinary buttons that provide information, activities, images, and ideas about the composer's cultural connections, inspirations, and compositional techniques. (INTERDISCIPLINARY BUTTONS) For example, a song line in *Grandmother Song* is performed with vocables. Students can learn about vocables, what they are, and their importance in Native American music.

3. *Meet living composers*

The guiding principal of the BandQuest series is that each work would be newly commissioned for middle level bands. Consequently there are many resources on each CD ROM that can introduce significant, living American composers to your students. Students will learn about Brent Michael Davids background and Mohican heritage, what influences his works, the inspirations for *Grandmother Song*, other music he's composed, and the instruments he's invented including the crystal flute.

- Learn background information from the composer's bio which can be printed out (TEACHERS GUIDE)
- View video interviews conducted by students (MEET THE COMPOSER)

- Watch the composer work with students (MEET THE COMPOSER)

4. Investigate connections between music and culture

One of the most useful aspects of the CD ROM for general music teachers is the many resources available for investigating music/cultural connections with your students. The materials in the Interdisciplinary buttons includes many audio and visual examples of music, instruments, performances, cultural events and celebrations, geographical and historical roots, cross cultural influences, environmental influences, and social history. All of the materials are presented in a colorful, visual format. Use the CD ROM for individual student research, materials for developing lessons, or as audio/visual resources a whole class can view. In *Grandmother Song* there are sections on:

- Traditional Native American music; a brief overview of musical traits of ten North American culture areas with maps, photos, and musical examples
- What happens at a powwow; powwow traditions; video of traditional men's and women's dances; powwow drumming
- Contemporary American Indian music and musicians with musical examples, video footage, and photos
- A section about vocables and their use in American Indian music

5. Learn more about music history and about some connections between music and other disciplines

You'll find a variety of specific topics from subject other than music and culture on the CD ROMS. Check the chart below for a summary of topics. *Grandmother Song* includes a section on the evolution of brass, woodwind, and percussion Instruments with history, sound, and images.

6. Nurture creativity and making musical choices

Each CD ROM includes a section with activities focused on creating music in some way. In Students can re-orchestrate the *Grandmother Song* by choosing different combinations of instruments, then describing why they selected particular sounds. They can enter their orchestration and use the software to play it for the class. (WHAT WAS THE 2nd create activity?) The creating activities are under the CREATE button of the CD ROM.

7. Assess student learning

Students can assess their own learning about *Grandmother Song* by playing the games included on the CD ROM (GAMES). The games include pitch matching, defining key terms, and identifying and matching examples of Native American music with the correct culture area on a map of North America. Scores for each game can be printed out for documentation. The questions in the games section may also be used to construct quizzes.