



FEATURE

How Bachata Got Its Groove

Meets National Core Arts Anchor Standards 2, 7, and 9

OBJECTIVES

- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work (Cr2)
- Perceive and analyze artistic work (Re7)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (Re9)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (October 2016)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access
- *Music Alive!* Classroom Worksheet #12: Staff Paper ([download at musicalive.com](#))
- Piano, classroom keyboards, and percussion

START

Have the students read “How Bachata Got Its Groove” on pages 10-13, then go over the following words. [This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.]

UNREQUITED—a feeling not returned

OPPRESSION—unjust treatment

BOYCOTTED—refused to participate

STIGMA—set of unfair negative beliefs about something

ABATING—becoming weaker

DEVELOP

► **1. Play “Qué Será de Mi (Condena)”** by José Manuel Calderón (Hear the Music **track 5** on [musicalive.com](#)).

ASK

- **What instrument do you hear in the very beginning?** (Acoustic guitar with nylon strings.)
- **Do you think it’s one guitar, or two?** (Two.)
- **Do the guitars sound plucked or strummed?** (Plucked.)
- **Are they playing in unison, or playing complementary parts?** (Complementary.)
- **What instruments join in on the second measure?** (Percussion and bass.)
- **Is the song in a major or minor key?** (Minor—C minor.)
- **What is the song’s time signature?** (4/4.)
- **How would you describe the emotion conveyed by the music?** (Melancholy, etc.)
- **Based on your reading, who do you think is the artist?** (José Manuel Calderón.)

► **2. Play Juan Luis Guerra’s “Bachata Rosa”** (Hear the Music **track 6** on [musicalive.com](#)).

ASK

- **What is the song’s time signature?** (4/4.)
- **Is it in a major or minor key?** (Major—G Major.)
- **What instruments do you hear in the intro?** (Acoustic-electric guitar, electric bass, piano, and percussion, plus background singers.)

• **How would you describe what the guitar is doing—is it strumming, or playing arpeggios?** (Playing arpeggios.)

• **Can anyone identify the basic rhythm of the bass part?** (In each bar: half note, followed by two quarter notes.)

• **How would you compare the mood of this song to the previous one?** (It’s a bit more cheerful.)

• **Why is that?** (This is largely due to the song being in the brighter key of G major.)

• **Does it seem like this piece was recorded before or after the last one—and how can you tell?** (After, given the presence of the electric bass and the overall sound of the recording.)

• **Do you prefer the sound of the older piece or the newer—and why?** (Subjective.)

► **3. Play “Enseñame a Olvidar”** by Aventura (Hear the Music **track 7** on [musicalive.com](#)).

ASK

- **What’s the time signature?** (4/4.)
- **Is the song in a major or minor key?** (Major—Ab major.)
- **What kind of mood does the music create?** (Bright, etc.)
- **Does it sound like the chords are triadic (having three notes) or more complex?** (Triadic.)
- **What’s different about the lead guitars in this piece compared to the previous songs?** (They’re electric, using electronic effects like chorus and distortion.)
- **What do these two effects do?** (Chorus makes the guitar sound doubled, and distortion makes it sound rough.)
- **Is the bass acoustic or electric?** (Electric.)
- **Are the background vocals (heard throughout the song) in harmony or unison?** (Harmony.)
- **In the context of bachata, which do you prefer—the sound of acoustic instruments or electric?** (Subjective.)
- **Which of these three pieces do you prefer—and why?** (Subjective.)

CLOSE

Give the students copies of the staff paper worksheet or have them use notation software. Ask the students to make short compositions with a bass line featuring the same rhythm used in “Bachata Rosa,” as well as a melody line. Then have the students perform their own compositions on classroom keyboards in front of the class, or play each other’s pieces.

ASSESS

- **Did the students read the article?**
- **Did they talk about the listening selections?**
- **Did they write their pieces and play them?**