Introduction to Irish Traditional Music

David Lee & Ann Marie Corcoran, First Year Music

TOpic Overview

Given that our team teaching project coincided with Seachtain na Gaeilge, we felt it would be appropriate to introduce the class to basic concepts around Irish traditional music. Because it was such a broad topic to try and cover in forty minutes, we decided it would be best to focus on traditional instruments. It was hoped that by the end of the lesson, students would leave with a basic overview of Irish traditional music and be able to aurally identify the main instruments of the Irish musical tradition. They would also begin learning Whiskey in the Jar on tin whistle.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Students were divided into 4 groups for a listening exercise. Each group was given a placemat on which they were to write the instruments they could hear. Groups rotated after each of the 4 songs so that each group could write on each placemat:

RESOURCES

• White board
• YouTube
• Tin whistle
• Placemats

LEARNING OUTCOMES

• Students should develop a basic understanding of Irish traditional music
• Students should be aware of the main instruments of the Irish tradition and be able to aurally identify them
• Students should know the opening two lines of Whiskey in the Jar

STUDENT FEEDBACK

“I think team teaching should be used all the time!”

“I spent more time interacting with a teacher than I usually would!”

“It really helped when learning the tin whistle piece!”

HOW DID IT GO?

The students responded well and pupil engagement was high throughout the lesson.

We felt that co-teaching was particularly effective in the practical activity as it allowed for students to be given individual attention.

LESSON PLAN OUTLINE

• Teacher 1 prepares online resources. Teacher 2 engages in brainstorming activity on the board: students discuss what they already know about Irish music
• Teacher 1 assorts students into 4 groups. Teacher 2 provides each group with an A2 sheet (placemat)
• Students listen to variety of Irish traditional pieces and write what instruments they hear on the placemat. Groups rotate after each song until every group has written on every placemat. Teachers circulate and help groups. Students then decide on which instruments are melodic or harmonic with help from the teachers.
• Students begin learning Whiskey in the Jar: Teacher 1 stands at the top of the room with the keyboard while Teacher 2 circulates and helps individuals