

# Study Guide for Teachers

## Music from Around the World

*Dennis Waring*

**Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism  
Master Teaching Artist**



Young  
Audiences  
Arts for  
Learning  
Connecticut

### ABOUT THE ARTIST



Dennis Waring, ethnomusicologist, music educator, performer, instrument maker, and author of six books, is proprietor of Waring Music, providing music resources for a wide variety of applications. He is a Connecticut Master Teaching Artist and was selected as “Connecticut State Troubadour” for 2003-2004.

### OBJECTIVES

- Study indigenous cultures through their music and instruments
- Learn how cultures are connected through comparison of instruments and rhythmic similarities.
- Hands on experience with instruments from different cultures.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Music from Around the World is a one hour tour through the music of six different world cultures.

Dr. Waring traveled around the world during the spring of 1999 as shipboard ethnomusicologist with the University of Pittsburgh's Semester At Sea program. He brought back many fascinating musical instruments and stories.

This presentation is a result of his experiences and adventures in several of the countries he visited. Designed for small audiences (100 people maximum), the program emphasizes group interaction and participation. Musical instruments, each unique to the culture represented, are demonstrated and discussed in regard to points of history, social studies, science and art. Participants will engage in song and instrument play representative of several different cultures.



## CULTURES EXPLORED

Native Peoples: How did music begin? Instruments like the musical bow, bullroarer and conch shell trumpet have been used by tribal cultures since the beginning of time. Communicating with the spirit world through music is a universal trait among early societies.

Latin America: Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean embody a massive amount of music with strong African and European influences. By playing the Brazilian samba, Cuban mambo, and Trinidadian calypso, participants learn about the rhythms and social milieu of these countries.

Africa: Drumming, singing and dancing go hand in hand throughout Africa. Playing drums together is a powerful and unique form of group interaction. The intoxicating rhythms of this wonderful culture have influenced music around the world.

India: The ancient music of India has a timeless quality. Many unusual sounds and instruments reveal a culture very different than American culture. From the sacred music of the singing bowl to the strident melody of the snake charmer, India holds a host of surprises.

China: A beautiful pictorial scene or sentiment expressed through sound is the greatest lure of Chinese music. With its lovely melodies and accessible musical scales, this music is one everybody can enjoy. Flutes, gongs, cymbals, and drums fill out this ensemble.

Folk Music of the USA: The folk music of the United States is historically revealing and fun to play. The Appalachian Mountain jug band is a classic of American music ensembles. Dulcimers, jew's harps, washboard, spoons, kazoos and a washtub bass make up this join-in activity.

### Source: The Connecticut Framework

- Music Content Standard 2
  - *Instrumental*  
Echo short rhythms and melodic patterns. Perform music representing diverse genres and cultures, with expression appropriate for the work being performed.
- Music Content Standard 9
  - *History and Cultures*  
Students will understand music in relation to history and culture.

### Who makes music and plays instruments?

It is a fact that every culture in the world, no matter how wealthy or poor, uses music for entertainment, celebrations, religious rituals, national identity, historical continuity, and social adhesion. Though not literally a universal language (sometimes we may not readily understand music of different cultures), making music is certainly a universal activity.

### What do people make their instruments from?

Normally, people use materials in their immediate ecological environment to make instruments. Those who have raw materials such as bamboo and gourds are lucky indeed as bamboo is great for making many kinds of wind and percussion instruments. Gourds might be used for the sound box of various stringed instruments or for shakers. Animal skins are of course useful for making drums. Animal bones and horns and sea shells may be utilized for trumpets. All kinds of wood can be fashioned into different varieties of instruments. And today, synthetic materials are made to fit the needs of the modern musician.

### How are instruments made?

Making instruments requires careful designing and crafting. Though anyone can make a simple instrument, masters of the craft learn to use special tools and apply their experience and knowledge to create complex instruments like violins and guitars. Whether a simple musical bow, concert piano, electric guitar or digital synthesizer, musical instruments invariably utilize the most advanced technologies available to a particular culture. Instrument makers must also be artists since they often decorate their instruments with meaningful symbols and designs. Instruments tell us a lot about ourselves.

### How do you make instruments sound good?

Instrument building involves a working knowledge of the science of sound called *acoustics*. There is much physics and math to consider when one makes or plays an instrument: principles of vibration, resonance, tone quality, and sound perception must be mastered by the instrument maker. If an instrument does not sound like it is supposed to, nobody will want to play it.

### Why do people make music?

Music can express things in ways that words cannot. Music can stir our feelings through a huge range of emotions: spiritual reverence, excitement, love, serenity, or even anger. Particular age groups (R'n'R), countries (national anthems), commercial interests (brand name jingles) and civic institutions (school fight songs) often use music as a kind of "sonic banner" with which to establish their social and cultural identities in the world. The type of music we listen to usually relates to the kind of group with which we associate ourselves.

## RESOURCES

- [Making Drums](#) by Dennis Waring
- [Make Your Own Electric Guitar and Bass](#) by Dennis Waring and David Raymond
- [Making Simple Music Instruments, a Melodious Collection of Strings, Winds, Drums and More](#), by Bart Hopkin
- [Making Musical Instruments by Hand](#) by Jay Havighurst

YOUNG AUDIENCE ARTS FOR LEARNING CONNECTICUT  
3074 WHITNEY AVENUE  
BUILDING 2, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR  
HAMDEN, CT 06518  
203-230-8101 telephone 203-230-8131 fax  
info@vaconn.org