

## Lesson Ideas

### Younger Students

Show students this YouTube video of the Riverdance performance *Thunderstorm*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yticZIfvSww4>

Ask students to clap in tempo with the music. Encourage students to feel the speed and experience the fast-paced excitement.

Ask students to listen to the suggested tunes and YouTube links below and have them identify the various Irish music instruments as they are being played. Encourage them to find as many as possible and write them down. Later, have them search those instruments online and study images to gain a further understanding of how each looks.

Play a traditional Irish song, such as *God Save Ireland*, and ask students to stand in a line and try dancing, without moving their arms.

### Older Students

Have older students listen to the suggested tunes and YouTube links below, identify the Irish music instruments and see whether they can distinguish certain key differences in some instruments. Examples include whether they can tell the difference in depth of sound from the wire-strung harp in *O'Carolan's Farewell to Music* as opposed to the more commonly used nylon or gut string harps; whether a tin whistle is being used or a traditional flute (the tin whistle will have a rougher, higher pitched sound).

Part One of *O'Carolan's Farewell to Music*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iM55ol0MyY>

A rendition of *Carolan's Dream* played on a gut-strung Celtic harp.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfIKx3YPL5I>

Given that the face of Irish music was significantly changed from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century versus very little deviation from the traditional sound of Irish music during the next hundred years - ask students to study the respective time periods. Have them pinpoint, by decade, the change in music styles by searching for music samples from each time period and discerning the differences as the decades progress. As a cumulative assignment, ask students to create a visual timeline, including samples of musicians, songs and/or instruments.

## Listening Activity

The meaning behind many Irish ballads is political in nature, inciting strong emotions while depicting important events and points in history through sound. Have students research the following ballads, study the time period and identify the strife faced by the Irish during those times. As they write a short background on each song, ask them to listen to the tunes. They should include whether the mood and tone of the song reflect the emotional and symbolic message of the lyrics. These songs can be found in the YouTube Links section.

- *Arthur McBride* - an anti-recruiting song
- *Alasdair MacColla* - from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and still performed today by **Clannad** on the 1996 album **Lore**
- *The Croppy Boy* - ballad depicts the suppressive period of the rebellion when family members refused to associate with the rebels in their families to avoid being accused of guilt by association
- *The Glen of Aherlow (aka Patrick Sheehan)* - ballad depicts an Irish soldier who was wounded during the Crimean War
- *Salonika* - two versions of this song were produced, one shedding a positive light on Irish involvement with the British Army in World War I and the second song shedding a negative view on the same.
- *The Ballad of Aidan McAnespie* - a lyrical rendition of a Catholic man in his early twenties, killed by a British soldier as he walked to a football event near a border checkpoint.

## Listening List

Composed by Gerald Barry: *Au milieu*

Various artists: *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls*

Ronan Tynan: *Danny Boy*

**The Wolfe Tones**: *God Save Ireland*

**The Chieftains**: *Foggy Dew*

*Boondock Saints* theme song: *The Blood of Cuchulainn*

Altan: *Gleanntáin Ghlas' Ghaoth Dobhair*

You can find free links to find this listening list on Youtube, plus itunes download links for resources in the listening list in the resources area for this unit.

## Resource List

An article on Irish traditional music and instruments

[http://www.culkinschool.com/education\\_music.htm](http://www.culkinschool.com/education_music.htm)

A profile piece on a world-renowned Irish musician

<http://itookthat.blogspot.com/2007/01/where-in-world.html>

The official website of the Irish group The Corrs

<http://www.thecorrswebsite.com/>

A *National Geographic* article on traditional Irish music

[http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/view/page.basic/genre/content.genre/irish\\_traditional\\_733/en\\_US](http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/view/page.basic/genre/content.genre/irish_traditional_733/en_US)

Top 10 Songs by modern Irish bands

[http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/2796036/10\\_great\\_songs\\_with\\_an\\_irish\\_flavor.html?cat=2](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/2796036/10_great_songs_with_an_irish_flavor.html?cat=2)

## YouTube Links

The Corrs: *Joy of Life/Trout in the Bath* (fiddle, tin whistle)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQ8B-WL\\_trQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQ8B-WL_trQ)

Altan: *Gleanntáin Ghlas' Ghaoth Dobhair* (with images of Ireland)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-ldyWs3axc>

Brian McNamara performs *The Humours of Glin* on a Uilleann pipe

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhW7R0lcoas>

Celtic guitar: *Battle of Augrim*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwWfpwoMOBg>

Riverdance - Michael Flatley: *Cry of the Celts*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQmBHvvrD4>

John Williams: *Learn to Play Irish Concertina*

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOJ1q9a6\\_3Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOJ1q9a6_3Y)

The Chieftains with Sinead O'Connor: *Foggy Dew*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13MQFCfCYdQ>

The Wolfe Tones: *God Save Ireland*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWmAwVE2hVg>

*The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Xpd2UopFXk>

Ronan Tynan: *Danny Boy*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBklPnOgs6o>

Paul Brady: *Arthur McBride*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBGkhPx529g>

Capercaillie: *Alasdair MacColla (Alasdair Mhic Cholla Ghasda)*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37rqwWjwZtY>

The Dubliners: *The Croppy Boy*

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_QMx1lXgUKc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_QMx1lXgUKc)

Johnny McEvoy: *The Glen of Aherlow*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QV8PAQVUUM>

Jimmy Crowley: *Salonika*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvNiZc94aic>

*The Ballad of Aidan McAnespie*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wn-E24grKL8>

*The Blood of Cuchulainn, Boondock Saints theme song*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkT2wW3-1jQ>