Chapter 4
The National Instrument

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(1) S, C/U
Page 59 (CD track 7, CD track 13)
Steel pan timbres

Listen to the steel pan timbre of "Jean and Dinah" (CD track 7) and "Backline" (CD track 13). How would students describe the timbral differences between the two. Answer: Pans in CD track 13 sound brighter and more sustained. Note to students that CD track 7 was recorded in 1956 and CD track 13 in 1986. The pans have evolved with a preference for brighter sounds. Ask students how the music they like has evolved. How did their music sound thirty years ago? Did technology play a role in the changed sound today?

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(2) S, C/U
Pages 60-61 (Activity 4.1)
What makes steel pan sounds bright

Follow suggestions in Activity 4.1 if possible. The activity can be extended by demonstrating the harmonics with more commonly available instruments in the American classroom (e.g., piano and guitar). The instrument used to demonstrate harmonics must be in-tune before the demonstration.

For the guitar, the teacher can play the low E string (sixth string) loudly. Students should be able to see the B string (second string) vibrating. B is a harmonic of the low E.

For the piano, the teacher can press down in silence the keys for middle C, and the E and G above it. This is to release the damper from these strings. Then play the C at two octaves below middle C loudly with a quick release. Students should be able to hear the middle C, and the E and G sounds, because these strings vibrate as they are the harmonics of the low C.

Point to the students that modern steel pans are made to generate more upper harmonics to help making them sound brighter.

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(3) AA
Page 64
Steel pan tuning

Use a pair of classroom instruments (e.g., Orff xylophones or tuned bells with removable bars) to tune to the complementary whole tone scales:

Play a song that students have been playing. This exercise is to experience the complementary nature of a pan tuning and to experience the coordination needed to play the steel pan.

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(4) AA
Pages 64-65
Outdoor music

Due to the competitive nature of steelband music on outdoor streets, its volume and power are extremely important. What outdoor music do American people have that also emphasize volume and power? Possible answers: marching band (this is the best example due to its processional and acoustic features), outdoor rock concert, or outdoor concerts at state fairs.

How do these American outdoor musical events differ from outdoor steelbands in Trinidad? If it is possible, show a video of an outdoor performance of a steelband and an American outdoor musical event for comparison. Homemade videos should work too.

Suggest students to attend a parade or an athletic event and listen for more than one ensemble playing simultaneously. Are the ensembles competing for volume and power? If so, how do they determine who win? If there is no competition, what is the purpose of the music? How can one tell if people are aware of the existence of the music? Develop a field project for an outdoor event. See **Worksheet 4.1** for more guiding questions.

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(5) AA
Page 66 (CD track 6, Figure 4.7)
Early bass line and polyrhythm

After listening to the bass line in "Jean and Dinah" (CD track 6), play the bass line on an instrument available in the classroom. See the notation in figure 4.7 of the text.

Use a bass instrument if possible. If multiple instruments are available, have all students play it.

Students can create a rhythmic pattern (using classroom percussion or body percussion) that goes along with the bass line. The rhythmic pattern may or may not be "lined up" with notes in the bass line. Then a second rhythmic pattern can be created to go along with the bass line and the first rhythmic pattern.

More advanced students may create a melody that goes along with the bass line and the rhythmic patterns. This creative activity demonstrates some important features of early calypso songs (steady bass line and polyrhythm).

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(6) AA
Pages 66-67 (Activity 4.3)
Braiding the irons

Bottles are good choices for irons, because they are more typically "found-sounds" in Trinidad. If the activity suggested in Activity 4.3 is not possible due to a lack of bottles, teachers may conduct the same activity using classroom instruments. The "first iron" and "second iron" parts could be substituted with lower-pitch and higher-pitch woodblocks respectively, and the "cutter" part could be substituted with a metallic percussion such as metal sticks, damped triangles, or a small cow bell.

If no instrument is available, the three parts can be chanted with three different syllables: "Tingi" (first iron), "Licki" (second iron), and "Ka" (cutter).

Note that this is a common way of speaking this iron part in Trinidad:
"   Licki   Licki
Tingi   Tingi   etc."

(7) E
Page 69 (CD track 13)
Form of "Backline"

Provide students with a sheet of paper with two circles in it. Instructors may reproduce the two circles from **Worksheet 4.2**.

Allow students to choose two different color crayons. Suggest to students that the circle represents the steelpans, because steelpans are round. Tell students that each circle represents a short steelpan musical example they are going to listen to. Play "Backline" (CD track 13) from 0'16" to 0'31" as students choose one color to fill circle number "1" to represent this steelpan example. This section may be played repeatedly to allow students to finish their coloring. Tell students that they are going to listen to another steelpan musical example. Use the circle number "2" to represent the second example. Use the same color if the examples are the same; use a different color if the second example differs from the first one.

Play "Backline" (CD track 13) from 0'47" to 1'02" as students color circle number "2." This example, again, may be played repeatedly to allow students to finish their coloring. Students should use a different color for the second circle, because the second example is different from the first one. If students believe that the examples are the same or if they use the same color on both circles, the instructor should provide hints to students that the second example sounds different and therefore a different color should be used.

Have students point to the first circle as they listen from 0'16" to 1'18". Provide a signal when students need to decide on staying with the same circle or changing to the other circle. Ask students how many times they have to use each circle for the whole example. Answer: twice. Each circle is used two times in a row, suggesting an "AABB" structure.

(8) S, C/U
Pages 69-70 (CD track 13, CD track 14, Activity 4.5)
Three part texture

Using classroom instruments (e.g., Orff bass xylophones), have students create a bass line using quarter notes and eighth notes in 4/4 time (similar to that of Figure 4.7). Design a chord progression with a strumming pattern, emphasizing the up beat, to go along with the bass line. Limit the chord progression to I, IV, V to keep the progression simple. Advanced students may use other chords. Strumming may be played on guitars, xylophones, or autoharps. Compose a melody that goes with the strumming chords. Tell students what main notes students can use for each chord. Other notes (i.e., non-chord notes) may be used as passing. The melody may be played on recorders, soprano xylophones or glockenspiels, or any melodic instrument available. This mini composition should reflect the three-part texture as heard in "Backline" (CD track 13): bass line, strumming, and melody.
Instructor may go through the listening activity suggested in Activity 4.5 with CD track 13 (chapter 4 of the text). The illustration clearly outlines the three-layer texture.

Worksheet 4.1
Outdoor Music

Student Name: _____   Teacher: _____

Class/Grade: _____   Date: _____

Name of outdoor music event: _____

Type of music being played: _____

Was the music loud? Yes / No

Was the music competing with other sound or other activities?
Yes / No

If yes, competing with what? _____

Ask three people if they noticed the music. Write a summary of
their responses below:

What was the effect of music on people?

Did anyone consider the music as "noise"? Why?

Worksheet 4.2
Settlement Patterns

Student Name: _____   Teacher: _____
_____

Class/Grade: _____   Date: _____
_____

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